



What to feed your Guinea Pig

Hay: the basic food

Hay or grass should be the mainstay of every guinea pig's diet. You need to provide as much fresh hay or grass as they will eat. It maintains the digestive system and helps in grinding down their teeth and preventing dental problems. Hay or grass should be available at all times.

Guinea pig pellets

Guinea pig pellets can be an easy way to provide your guinea pig with a good balance of vitamins, minerals and other nutrients. It is not 100% necessary to feed your guinea pig pellets however most guinea pigs love them. If you do choose to feed pellets you need to make sure you do not feed too many as they are generally quite high in calories which predisposes your guinea pig to becoming overweight. Pellets should also be fed as individual meals and not made available all the time.

When choosing your pellets, be sure to avoid the guinea pig "mixes" that contain nuts, seeds, molasses and dried fruits. These mixes are high in fats and oils, which can lead to excessive weight gain, digestive upsets and dental problems.

Vitamin C requirements

Guinea pigs cannot produce or store vitamin C, so they need to obtain it from their diet on a daily basis. Do not rely on pellets to provide all the vitamin C your guinea pig needs. The vitamin C in pellets will generally slowly degrade from manufacture (not from opening the bag), which makes it hard to know exactly how much vitamin C is available in the food you are feeding. Fresh fruit and vegetables or supplementing with vitamin C chews, liquid or tablets are the only way to ensure your guinea pig is getting enough vitamin C. For the vitamin C content of vegetables and fruits (courtesy of the Guinea Lynx website) see the charts on the right side of this page and the next.

Calcium

Calcium is also important for our guinea pigs for a number of body functions including bone health, however too much calcium can actually lead to problems. Guinea pigs excrete most of

VEGETABLE VITAMIN C CONTENT

190.0 mg -- Red Capsicum
133.0 mg -- Parsley
130.0 mg -- Spinach, Mustard
120.0 mg -- Kale
93.2 mg -- Broccoli
89.3 mg -- Green Capsicum
85.0 mg -- Brussels Sprouts
70.0 mg -- Mustard Greens
60.0 mg -- Turnip Greens
46.4 mg -- Cauliflower
45.0 mg -- Chinese Cabbage (pak-choi)
43.0 mg -- Watercress
35.0 mg -- Dandelion Greens
32.2 mg -- Cabbage
30.0 mg -- Chard, Swiss
30.0 mg -- Beetroot Leaves
30.0 mg -- Swiss Chard
28.1 mg -- Spinach
27.0 mg -- Coriander
25.0 mg -- Rutabaga
24.0 mg -- Cos Lettuce
24.0 mg -- Chicory Greens
22.7 mg -- Sweet Potato
21.1 mg -- Okra
21.0 mg -- Turnip
19.1 mg -- Tomato
18.0 mg -- Lettuce, Loose-leaf
17.0 mg -- Parsnips
16.3 mg -- Green Beans
14.8 mg -- Squash
13.2 mg -- Asparagus
11.0 mg -- Sweet Potato Leaves
9.3 mg -- Carrots
9.0 mg -- Pumpkin
8.4 mg -- Carrots, Baby
8.2 mg -- Alfalfa Sprouts
7.0 mg -- Celery
6.8 mg -- Corn, White
6.5 mg -- Endive
5.3 mg -- Cucumber (with skin)
4.9 mg -- Beetroot
2.8 mg -- Chicory





their excess calcium in their urine, if excessive levels of calcium are in their diet it can predispose them to having lots of calcium pass through their urinary system which can lead to urinary crystals and stones to form.

Fresh fruits and Vegetables

It can be confusing what we should and shouldn't feed our guinea pigs, not only do we have to think about the vitamin C content but also the calcium content and then after all that we have to find something our guinea pigs actually like to eat! Many guinea pigs can be quite fussy and their dietary preferences can change from pig to pig. The general idea is to provide a varied diet (a little bit of everything and not too much of one thing) and to make sure there is at least 2-3 high vitamin C vegetables provided every day.

It is also very important to remember that any diet change has to be performed gradually, even the introduction of a new fruit or vegetable. If you are introducing a new food, gradually increase the amount over 2-3 weeks, and only introduce one food at a time. If there is any diarrhoea, stop the new addition. Once the diarrhoea has resolved you may try again but in smaller amounts. This is even important when changing brands of pellets, where it is best to slowly introduce the new pellets by mixing with the older brand.

If you have any further questions please don't hesitate to get in touch with us.



FRUIT VITAMIN C CONTENT

- 98.0 mg -- Kiwi
- 61.8 mg -- Papaya
- 56.7 mg -- Strawberries
- 53.2 mg -- Orange
- 53.0 mg -- Lemon (no peel)
- 42.2 mg -- Cantaloupe
- 38.1 mg -- Grapefruit, Pink and Red
- 33.3 mg -- Grapefruit, White
- 30.8 mg -- Tangerine
- 29.1 mg -- Lime
- 27.7 mg -- Mango
- 24.8 mg -- Honeydew Melon
- 21.0 mg -- Blackberries
- 16.0 mg -- Casaba Melon
- 15.4 mg -- Pineapple
- 13.5 mg -- Cranberries
- 13.0 mg -- Blueberries
- 10.8 mg -- Grapes
- 10.0 mg -- Apricots
- 9.6 mg -- Raspberries
- 9.6 mg -- Watermelon
- 9.5 mg -- Plum
- 9.1 mg -- Banana
- 7.0 mg -- Cherries
- 6.6 mg -- Peach
- 5.7 mg -- Apple (with Skin)
- 5.4 mg -- Nectarine
- 4.0 mg -- Pear
- 3.3 mg -- Raisins, Seedless

