

# Hamster FAQs

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If you just brought home a hamster or you're thinking about getting one and you have some questions, you're in the right place! Below, we will answer all of your hamster questions so you can take great care of your new pet.

## How long do hamsters live?

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On average, hamsters live to be about 2 to 2-1/2 years old. However, there are some records of hamsters that have lived to be 4 years old.

## What kind of cage should I get for my hamster?

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Your hamster's cage should be at least 19" wide by 19" long. There are three kinds of cages you can get:

- Wire cage - don't get cages with wire floors, as these will hurt your hamster's feet and be harder for you to clean. If the cage has a wire mesh floor, put a cage mat down.
- Plastic cage - plastic cages are a great way to make sure your hamster gets enough exercise and entertainment, but they can be a little harder to clean.
- Aquarium - while this will give your hamster lots of space, he won't get as much fresh air. If you keep your hamster in an aquarium, be sure to put a secure lid on top of the cage to keep him safe.

## What should I put in my hamster's cage?

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Put lots of bedding in the bottom of the cage so he can burrow, play, and sleep in it. Give him a nest box filled with comfortable nesting material. Use a small, heavy ceramic bowl for his food and a water bottle for his water. He will also need an exercise wheel.

## Why does my hamster need an exercise wheel?

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Hamsters love to run, and they need lots of exercise. An exercise wheel is a great way to make sure he gets all the exercise he needs. The safest wheels will have a solid surface or a wire mesh surface to protect his feet. Your hamster will probably run a lot at night, so get the quietest wheel you can. The Silent Spinner is a good choice.

## What toys will my hamster like?

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Hamsters like toys that allow them to chew, run and burrow. An exercise wheel provides fun entertainment in addition to exercise. Other toys your hamster will like include tunnels, small cardboard boxes and tubes, and chew toys.

## Why does my hamster need chew toys?

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Hamsters need to gnaw on wood to wear down their teeth. Like other rodents, hamsters have teeth that keep growing, and if they don't have wood chew toys, their teeth get too long. Wood chews also help to keep your hamster from getting bored.

## What do hamsters eat?

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Feed your hamster a quality hamster food. It should contain seeds, dried vegetables, small grains and other healthy ingredients. Your hamster will only eat about one tablespoon a day, so only give him a little at a time. You should supplement his pellet food with fresh fruit, fresh vegetables, and a small amount of hay two or three times a week. You can also give your hamster treats once in a while, but not too much! Treats should only make up a tiny portion of his daily diet.

## How do I get my hamster to let me hold him?

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It will take a little time to tame your hamster. Always be gentle and calm when you hold him or talk to him so he feels safe. To tame your hamster, start out by talking to him through his cage. Try feeding him treats from your hand, and when he takes them, allow him to crawl into your hand. When he will willingly crawl into your hand, pick him up gently. Make sure not to wake your hamster up to hold him. You're probably grumpy when someone wakes you up, and your hamster will be too!

## How should I clean up after my hamster?

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If you keep your hamster's cage clean, he will be happy and healthy. There are daily and weekly chores you will have to do.

### Daily:

- Remove wet, soiled bedding
- Give him fresh food and water
- Remove any stashed food from his nesting box

### Weekly:

- Change all the bedding
- Wash and disinfect the cage and cage accessories

Put your hamster in a run-about ball while you are cleaning to keep him safe.