Guinea Pig Glossary of Terms

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff

Alfalfa hay

Alfalfa hay is a hay that has more protein and calcium than other hays. You should only feed it regularly to young guinea pigs. Older guinea pigs should only get it as a treat.

Bedding

Bedding refers to the wood shavings or wood fiber shavings that you should put in the bottom of your guinea pig's cage. Guinea pigs play and sleep in their bedding. They will also go to the bathroom in one part of it.

Boar

A boy guinea pig.

Breeds

There are 13 different breeds of guinea pigs. Different breeds will have different coat colors. Some have longer fur and some have shorter fur. Some of these breeds are American, Teddy, and White Crested.

Cavy

A cavy is another name for a guinea pig.

Chew toys

These are wooden toys that your guinea pig can safely chew on to wear down his teeth. Chew toys can be actual toys, or they can be natural wood chews like branches.

Food bowl

Guinea pigs eat their food out of a bowl. Guinea pigs can't climb, so they need a food bowl that sits low to the ground. A small, heavy ceramic bowl is the best bowl to use.

Guinea Pig

Even though you may think that your guinea pig is a pig because of what he's called, they are actually rodents. They make great pets and fun friends.

Herbivore

An "herbivore" is an animal that eats only plants, no meat. Guinea pigs are herbivores.

Herds

A "herd" is a large group of guinea pigs. In the wild, guinea pigs live in herds.

Nest box

This is an enclosed space where your guinea pig will hide and sleep. Guinea pigs love to explore things, so this can be a toy for him too. Your guinea pig's nest box can be made from plastic, wood, or cardboard.

Pellet diet

Guinea pigs eat a pellet shaped food - a pellet diet. There are many guinea pig foods to choose from, so make sure you pick one that has a lot of

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Vitamin C.

Popcorning
This is when a happy guinea pig jumps straight up and down.

Pup
A baby guinea pig.

Scurvy
This is a disease that guinea pigs can get when they don't get enough Vitamin C in their diets.

Sow
A girl guinea pig.

Timothy hay
Timothy hay is a grass hay. Your adult guinea pig should always have access to fresh timothy hay. Timothy hay (and other hays) contains a lot of fiber, and guinea pigs need fiber in their diets.

Treats
A treat is something you can give your guinea pig once in a while. There are lots of different kinds of treats to choose from, but always make sure that treats make up only a very small amount of the food your guinea pig eats each day. The best treats are hay and grass treats and treats that contain Vitamin C.

Vitamin C
Guinea pigs can't make this vitamin, so they need a lot of it every day from different sources such as food, treats, fruits and vegetables.

Water bottle
This is a plastic or glass bottle that you hang on the side of your guinea pig's cage. We recommend using a water bottle rather than a water bowl to keep the water fresh and clean so your guinea pig gets the water he needs. Always remember to refill it every day.

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