Short-haired and long-haired (teddy bear) hamsters are clean and captivating companion animals that are best kept individually.

**facts**

- **average adult size:** 4 to 5 inches long
- **average life span:** up to 2 to 3 years with proper care
- **diet:** omnivores

*Note: The information on this Care Sheet is not a substitute for veterinary care. If you need additional information, refer to the Sources section or contact your veterinarian as appropriate.*

Developed with and approved by a qualified veterinarian.
Weight loss
Abnormal hair loss
Diarrhea or dirty bottom
Distressed breathing
Lethargic
Eye or nasal discharge

Skin lesions
Overgrown teeth

If you notice any of these signs, contact your veterinarian.

Diabetes
Frequent urination and lethargy.
Consult with a veterinarian.

Diarrhea
Loose stool caused by poor diet, stress, internal parasites, unclean housing or other illness.
Consult with a veterinarian to determine cause and treatment.

Malocclusion
Overgrown teeth.
Consult with a veterinarian to have teeth trimmed regularly.

Mites
External parasites that cause hamsters to lose patches of hair.
Consult a veterinarian for treatment.

A well-balanced hamster diet consists of:
- High-quality hamster lab blocks and limited amounts of grains, vegetables, fruits and Timothy hay.
- Clean, fresh, filtered, chlorine-free water, changed daily.
- Do not feed chocolate, caffeine or alcohol as these can cause serious medical conditions. Avoid sugar and high-fat treats.

Hamsters acclimate well to average household temperatures, not to exceed 80°F; be cautious of extreme temperature changes. The habitat should never be in direct sunlight or in a drafty area.

Habitat should be plastic, metal or glass with an escape-proof solid bottom; there should be plenty of room for the hamster to exercise and play. It is best to provide the largest habitat possible.

1 to 2” of bedding should be placed in the habitat; proper bedding includes high-quality paper bedding, crumbled paper bedding or hardwood shavings. Cedar-based products are not recommended.

House adult hamsters separately. Different types of small animals should not be housed together.

Play during the night and rest during the day (nocturnal) but can adjust to your schedule.

Easy to handle but may nip if suddenly awakened from a nap or startled.

Chew on objects to maintain incisor teeth, which grow continuously; ensure they have plenty of wood chew sticks or mineral chews.

Consult with a veterinarian if a hamster’s teeth seem too long.

Active, alert and sociable
Eats and drinks regularly
Healthy fur and clear eyes
Breathing is unlabored
Walks normally

A limited amount of grain, vegetables, fruits or Timothy hay can be given daily but should not exceed 10% of their total diet
Vegetables and fruits not eaten within 24 hours should be discarded.

Clean, fresh, filtered, chlorine-free water, changed daily.
Do not feed chocolate, caffeine or alcohol as these can cause serious medical conditions. Avoid sugar and high-fat treats.

Fresh food and water should always be available.

Things to remember when feeding your hamster:

Vegetables and fruits not eaten within 24 hours should be discarded.

A limited amount of grain, vegetables, fruits or Timothy hay can be given daily but should not exceed 10% of their total diet

Consult a veterinarian for treatment.

Consult a veterinarian if a hamster’s teeth seem too long.

Consult with a veterinarian if a hamster’s teeth seem too long.

Consult with a veterinarian to determine cause and treatment.

Consult a veterinarian to have teeth trimmed regularly.

Consult a veterinarian for treatment.

Frequent urination and lethargy.
Consult with a veterinarian.

Loose stool caused by poor diet, stress, internal parasites, unclean housing or other illness.
Consult with a veterinarian to determine cause and treatment.

Overgrown teeth.
Consult with a veterinarian to have teeth trimmed regularly.

External parasites that cause hamsters to lose patches of hair.
Consult a veterinarian for treatment.

Healthy fur and clear eyes
Breathing is unlabored
Walks normally

Check with a veterinarian if a hamster’s teeth seem too long.

Consult a veterinarian to determine cause and treatment.

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Consult with a veterinarian to have teeth trimmed regularly.

Consult a veterinarian for treatment.
shopping list for needed supplies

- Appropriately sized habitat
- High-quality hamster food
- Treats
- Bedding
- Nesting fluff
- Food bowl/water bottle
- Exercise wheel
- Hideaway place
- Toys
- Wood chews
- Mineral chews
- Chew tubes
- Book about hamsters

sources

Ask a store partner about Petco’s selection of books on hamsters and the variety of private brand products available for the care and happiness of your new pet. All private brand products carry a 100% money-back guarantee.

Because all small animals are potential carriers of infectious diseases, such as Lymphocytic Choriomeningitis, Rat Bite Fever and *Salmonella*, always wash your hands before and after handling your small animal or habitat contents to help prevent the potential spread of disease.

Pregnant women, children under the age of 5, senior citizens and people with weakened immune systems should contact their physician before purchasing or caring for small animals and should consider not having a small animal as a pet.

Go to [cdc.gov/healthypets](http://cdc.gov/healthypets) and [petco.com/caresheet](http://petco.com/caresheet) for more information about small animals and disease.

This Care Sheet can cover the care needs of other species. Go to [petco.com](http://petco.com) for more information.