

Pet files

Fun fact!

A guinea pig can run when it is only 3 hours old!

Did you know that there is a special law protecting animals? It says that your pet has five welfare needs. These are five things that animals need to be healthy and happy!

In *Animal Antics*, we will be taking a look at the five welfare needs of our most popular pets. In this issue we are looking at guinea pigs!



Fun fact!

Guinea pigs will fall asleep on your lap if they trust you

It may seem that guinea pigs are quite easy to look after, but they have five very important welfare needs...

The need for a suitable environment

Guinea pigs need a large weatherproof home, raised off the ground, which can be moved indoors in cold weather. They need plenty of soft hay for bedding and clean wood shavings on the floor. Their home should be cleaned every day and bedding changed weekly. You will need to provide a large, safe, grassy area for them to exercise in. And it is also important that someone looks after them for you if you go away on holiday.



The need for a suitable diet

You will need to feed your guinea pigs twice a day with a mixture of hay, guinea pig nuggets and cleaned fruit and vegetables. You also need to make sure they have constant access to fresh, clean drinking water from a water bottle with a metal spout.



The need to exhibit normal behaviour

To make sure your guinea pigs don't get bored, you'll need to provide suitable toys such as large tubes and shelters. You should also provide a gnawing block, as this will help them to wear their teeth down. It is best to handle your guinea pigs carefully from a young age, so they get used to people.



The need to be housed with or apart from other animals

Guinea pigs need to have company. Don't keep males and females together as they can breed and it can be very difficult to find homes for their babies. Guinea pigs and rabbits shouldn't be kept together as they can bully each other and they both need company from their own kind.



The need to be protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease

You will need to keep a close eye on the health of your guinea pigs and take them to a vet if they show any signs of disease or injury. Long-haired breeds will need grooming daily and short-haired breeds, once a week. You should get your guinea pigs used to grooming from an early age.



Did you know?

A guinea pig's ears are very sensitive to loud noises



Your Right Pet!

PDSA has a fantastic online tool to help you choose **Your Right Pet**. It's fun too – a cartoon animal changes into different pets as you answer four special questions. The cartoon ends up as a mixture of different pets which our vets think might suit your family. The website then gives you all the info you need about those animals so that you can choose the right pet. Why not visit the Young PDSA website to find out more and have a go at finding Your Right Pet?

www.youngpdsa.org.uk/your-right-pet

