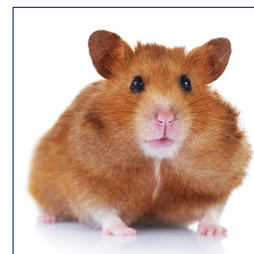


Gerbil

Scientific Name: Gerbillinae

Brief Description:



There are approximately one-hundred-ten species of Gerbil in existence today. They are very social creatures with a bold and curious personality that enjoy observing the activity of a busy household. Gerbils love to burrow and place in tubes and boxes and are relatively easy to care for.

Average Size: The average size of a Gerbil is approximately four-to-five inches.

Life Span: The average lifespan of a Gerbil is up to five years.

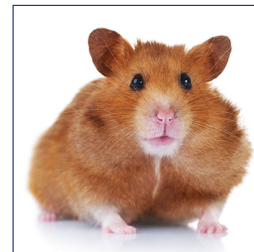
Feeding:

- Provide fresh, clean, de-chlorinated water and food, daily.
- Small amounts of vegetables and fruits can be provided, daily.
- Food items not consumed within twenty-four hours should be removed immediately.
- High quality gerbil food should contain
 - o Fourteen percent protein
 - o Four percent fat
 - o A maximum of five percent fiber.
- Treats should not exceed ten percent of food intake.
- Do not feed chocolate, alcohol or caffeine.
- Gerbil's on premium foods do not need additional vitamin supplements.

Gerbil

Scientific Name: Gerbillinae

Housing:



- Gerbils acclimate well to average household temperatures.
- Avoid extreme temperature changes, at all times.
- Habitat should not be left in direct sunlight or in drafty area.
- Gerbil habitat should be made of glass, plastic or metal, be escape proof with a solid bottom.
- A fifteen gallon aquarium makes a good home for two Gerbils.
- One-to-two inches of bedding is required in the habitat.
 - o Can be composed of hardwood shavings, pelleted or recycled products.
 - o Cedar bedding may cause harm and is not recommended.

Maintenance:

- Remove wet spots, daily.
- Change bedding weekly or as needed.
- Wash all items in the habitat, rinse and let dry before returning.
- Habitat should be clean scrubbed, once a week with mild soap and water.

Temperatures: Stable room temperature is adequate.

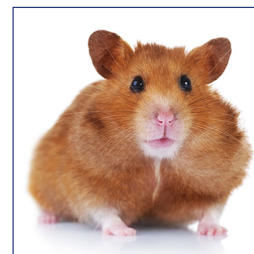
Humidity: No special requirements.

Gerbil

Scientific Name: Gerbillinae

Lighting:

Gerbils are nocturnal, keep out of direct sunlight. Use room lighting as needed.



Water and Accessories:

- Provide your Gerbil with a sipper bottle, hung from the side of the cage
- Provide your Gerbil with small toys to play with and a running wheel for exercise.
- Keep a food bowl, chew stick and nesting house as well.

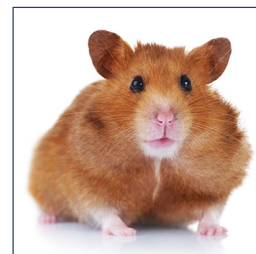
Reproductive: (mating and Birthing)

- Gerbils start mating at about three months of age.
- Gerbils typically mate in the early evening hours.
- A female Gerbil will produce pups until she is two years old.
- A male Gerbil can continue producing throughout his lifetime.
- Gestation will be anywhere from twenty-four to as long as twenty-eight days.
- A pregnant Gerbil is not obvious until a few days before birth.
 - o She will feel heavier, become pear-shaped and have a bulge in the belly area.
- Do not disturb or handle baby Gerbils nor the parents. Watch from a distance.
- A baby Gerbil will reach from underneath, pull out the baby, clean it and eat the placenta.
 - o It's possible that during the birth, or shortly their after, the pair will mate again.

Gerbil

Scientific Name: Gerbillinae

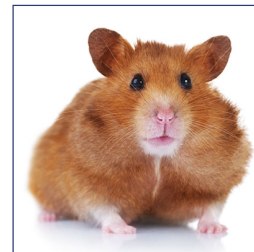
Reproductive: (The First Few Days)



- Parent Gerbils do not cannibalize their babies, but do they instinctually "clean up" still borns, or babies that die shortly after birth.
- If only a single pup is born, the female Gerbil will likely not provide enough milk and the pup will have to be fostered.
- After birthing, the female will remove the father Gerbil from her nest within one-to-two days, so she can attend to her new borns.
 - o The dad Gerbil may sneak a pup or two into his nest for company.
 - o In general, you can return these pups to her mom.
- Always wash your hands before and after handling pup's.
 - o In general, Gerbils don't mind the scent of their people, but foreign scents may provoke them into attacking their young or rejecting them.
- The female Gerbil may become distract and will run around, digging and scratching corners.
 - o Leave her alone during this time.
 - o Drape a towel over half the tank.
 - o Give her some unscented toilet tissues
 - o Warm one corner of the tank, but not too hot using a forty watt grow light and position it several inches from the tank.
 - o Use a thermometer to ensure the tank temperature does not exceed eighty-five °F.

Gerbil

Scientific Name: Gerbillinae



Reproductive: (The First Few Days - con't)

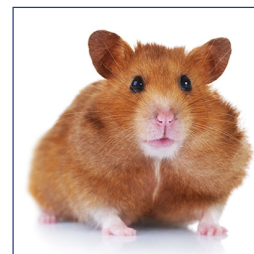
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 - o Give her some unscented toilet tissues
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 - o Use a thermometer to ensure the tank temperature does not exceed eighty-five °F.
- Mother Gerbil, if feeling nervous or threatened, may move her litter from one corner of the enclosure to the other.
- During the first few days, do not make any changes to your Gerbils environment. Do not remove anything and do not add anything.
- Check on the new pups a few times a day, but leave raising the litter to mom and dad, without interfering.
- If pup's get separated from the nest, put the pup back into the nest.
 - o Wash your hands before and after the fact.

Reproductive: (The First Few Weeks)

- Prior to handling pups, give the parents a bit cardboard or food to distract them for a few minutes.
- By day seven, pups should have a light coat of fuzz.

Gerbil

Scientific Name: Gerbillinae



Reproductive: (The First Few Weeks - con't)

- Use caution when handling. Enclose pup in two hands and place on blanket or a pillow. Be very careful, they will crawl, wiggle and waddle right out of your hand if you're not careful.
- At this age, handle babies for only a few minutes, daily.
- At seven-to-ten days, you'll be able to sex the Gerbils using the "nipple method".
- At ten-to-twenty-days, babies will be nicely furred.
 - o At this age, you'll be able to determine the colors.
 - o They will become very comfortable In your hands.
 - o They sit up and wash their faces.
 - o They are likely to crawl up your sleeve.
 - o Continue placing them on a pillow or blanket.
- At about seventeen-to-twenty-one days, their eyes will open.
 - o If they don't open, you can use a soft, damp cloth and rub the yes, very lightly.
- At about twenty-four-days they should be calm and relaxed.
 - o Try handling them with more frequency at this time, during the early evening.

Grooming:

Hamsters stay clean and do not need baths. A teddy bear hamster's fur needs to be combed regularly with a soft brush; other hamsters may be combed as necessary.

Gerbil

Scientific Name: Gerbillinae

Notes and Comments:

Hamsters are active during the night and sleep during the day (nocturnal). They are easy to handle once trust is established between you and your hamsters; they may become irritable and nip if suddenly awakened from a nap or startled.

Hamsters chew on objects to maintain the incisor teeth, which grow continuously. Use cheek pouches to transfer food from one location to another.

They are solitary, never house more than one adult hamster per habitat.

