



## GUINEA PIG CARE GUIDE: BEHAVIOR

Every guinea pig looks, acts, and sounds different; just like people. This is a general guide to guinea pig sounds and body language. Interacting with your guinea pig is the best way to learn what they are trying to communicate to you.

### VOCALIZATION

**Wheeking:** When a guinea pig is excited, happy, or wants attention, they will let out several long, loud squeals, or whistles. Most guinea pigs will learn what the sound of a refrigerator opening, or food being prepared, means and wheek with excitement.

**Teeth Chattering/Grinding:** This is a sign that your guinea pig is angry or annoyed.

**Shrieking:** A piercing, high-pitched squeak that means your guinea pig is frightened or worried.

**Rumbling:** A deep rumbling sound, often accompanied by a little dance, is emitted by a male guinea pig romancing a female.

**Purring:** There are several different types of purring and each guinea pig is a bit different. A deeper purr (not as deep and rumbling) means your guinea pig is content but a shorter or higher pitched purr can mean annoyance or uncertainty. You can usually tell based on body language differences.

**Whining:** Whining or moaning means your guinea pig is annoyed or dislikes something.

**Chirping:** This sound is not often heard and is sometimes referred to as "singing." Not all guinea pigs do it and it's meaning is not understood.



### SOUNDS OF RESPIRATORY ILLNESS

- Clicking
- Sneezing
- Gurgling

If your guinea pig is making any of these sounds, take it to the veterinarian as soon as possible.

### BODY LANGUAGE

**Hopping:** Guinea pigs hop, bounce, leap, and run around when they are happy and having fun. This is also called popcorning.

**Licking:** Guinea pigs lick themselves and each other to groom. If your guinea pig licks you, it means you are loved!

**Head Tossing:** When you are petting your guinea pig and he tosses your hand away with his head it means he is annoyed and wants you to stop.

**Fidgeting:** If your guinea pig fidgets while you are holding him he may need to go to the bathroom or is tired of being held. Either way, it's time to give him a break.

**Scent Marking:** Like cats, guinea pigs rub their faces on items to mark them with their scent.

**Mounting:** This is either a sexual behavior or a dominant behavior.

**Freezing:** A guinea pig will stop suddenly and freeze if startled or frightened.

**Signs of Aggression:** Rising on hind legs, shuffling from side to side with stiff legs, hair puffed up, hissing, teeth chattering, and/or showing teeth.