



GUINEA PIG CARE GUIDE: SAFE HANDLING AND GROOMING

SAFE HANDLING

Through the Bars: Never feed your guinea pig or stick your fingers through the cage bars. Doing so encourages pets to bite at fingers both in and out of the cage. Offer treats from your hand with an open palm.

TRUST

It is ideal to let your guinea pig come to you before reaching in to pick them up as this develops trust. Talk to your guinea pig and let it sniff your hand before you pick it up to announce that you are there. Guinea pigs do not have strong eyesight and this will help prevent startling them.

Picking Up Your Guinea: Most guinea pigs tolerate, but do not enjoy, being picked up. They feel more safe and secure on the ground. So, try to pick up your pig only when necessary. Always use two hands when picking up your guinea pig; one hand to support the rump while the other supports the chest. It sometimes helps to talk softly to comfort your guinea pig.



GROOMING

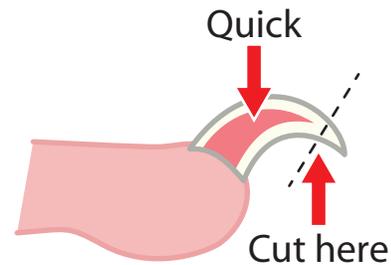
Dental Care: You do not need to brush your guinea pig's teeth, however it is important to provide plenty of chew toys so your guinea pig can wear down its teeth naturally. Check your guinea pig's teeth regularly to be sure they are not overgrown or misaligned. If they are, take him to the veterinarian. Guinea pig teeth should be trimmed by a professional.

Bathing: Guinea pigs are clean animals and take grooming seriously. If you do have to bathe your guinea pig, make sure you use a gentle shampoo such as kitten shampoo.

Brushing: Use a soft bristled brush to work through any tangles. Long haired guinea pigs should be brushed daily.

Ears: Check your guinea pig's ears for debris every couple of days. Clean as needed by placing a drop of mineral oil in the ear and wiping clean.

Nails: Guinea pigs need their nails trimmed regularly; usually every four–five weeks. You can do this at home or have your veterinarian do it for you. Guinea pigs have four toes on their front feet and three toes on their back feet.



When trimming your guinea pig's nails, be sure to only clip the clear part of the nail, avoiding the pink vein (quick). Use small animal or cat nail clippers and try to cover up the toe with your fingers so that only the nail is exposed. If you accidentally cut the quick, dip your pet's foot in corn flour or styptic powder. It is often easier to trim nails if you have a second person to hold the pig. Nail trims can be scary for a guinea pig, so be sure to give breaks and lots of treats! Sometimes it is easier on you and your pig if you only do one or two feet per session.