



## HAMSTER CARE GUIDE: HOUSING

### CAGE

**Size:** Two cubic feet minimum for a single dwarf hamster, adding 1/2 cubic feet per additional dwarf hamster. The larger Syrian hamsters require at least three cubic feet for a single hamster.

**Material:** Aquarium tanks and tub/bin cages are ideal as they provide the size, security, and depth needed for hamsters to thrive. Hamsters do best in deep cages, with layers of bedding and tunnels to explore and nest in. Syrian hamsters can be kept in rat cages with multiple levels and deep pans with bar spacing of at least 1/4 inch. Be sure to put the levels close together and/or have hammocks to prevent hamsters from falling very far if they do fall. Hamsters are not as agile as most rodents.

**Habitrails are not ideal for hamsters because can be too small for hamsters and many connected are very difficult to clean.**

### BEDDING

#### Good

- CareFresh
- Shredded paper
- Paper towels
- Yesterday's News (paper pellets)
- Fleece

#### Bad

- Cedar
- Pine
- Corn cob
- Saw dust
- Clay cat litter

### BEDDING TIP

Use paper pellets to line the bottom of the cage then add high layers of shredded paper or CareFresh for nesting/burrowing. Avoid all wood bedding as it can lead to respiratory illness.

### FURNISHINGS

Decking out your hamster cage with the essentials and an assortment of fun stuff is incredibly important for the happiness and well-being of your hamster. It is ideal to periodically change out the toys and furnishings for them, in addition to providing a variety of several items. The cage should be full of things to do, places to climb or burrow, things to chew, tunnels, tubes to hide, etc.

#### Essentials

- Water bottle
- Food dish
- Shelter (box, igloo, etc.)
- Chew toy (wood, lava)
- Nesting material for burrowing and tunneling making
- Wheel with a solid base (never wire)

#### Fun Stuff

- Tunnels
- Bird toys
- Treat balls
- Paper
- Bits of fabric
- Ladders
- Cardboard
- Old socks
- Paper towel rolls

**Why chew toys?** Hamsters' teeth constantly grow. They require chew toys to gnaw on in order to keep their teeth trim.



Information courtesy of Minnesota Pocket Pet Rescue