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Animal Hospital & Wellness Center

The Best Care For Your Companion

All about Chinchillas

Facts about Chinchillas:

- Chinchillas are rodents.
- Chinchillas can make great pets due to the ease of care, have very little odor and rarely bite.
- Chinchillas require a more long term commitment because they typically live about 10 years, but can live up to 20 years.

Chinchilla Traits and Behavior:

- Chinchillas are mostly nocturnal and will be very active at night. The majority of the day will be spent sleeping, but they do have some periods of activity.
- Chinchillas can bond quickly with their owners if handled and interacted with on a regular basis.
- Chinchillas are affectionate, intelligent and have charming personalities.
- Baby chinchillas (called kits) are born with full body hair and a complete set of teeth. Their eyes are open within a day.
- Chinchillas must be handled gently to avoid damaging their soft coat. Grasping at the body or pulling the tail can cause large clumps of fur to come out, leaving unsightly bald patches.

Habitat:

- Chinchilla cages should be well ventilated. Air should flow freely through the cage. Keep the cage in a cool, low humidity area out of direct sunlight and away from air vents.
- Chinchillas can either be housed individually, in pairs or in a group that consists of one male and 2 to 4 females.
- Chinchillas should be housed in large rabbit-sized enclosures, as they are very active, acrobatic animals. Welded wire mesh works well.
- Chinchillas need climbing areas in their housing, along with a nesting/sleeping box.
- Dust baths help chinchillas keep clean without becoming chilled. About 2-3 inches of dust in a dust box works well. Allow the chinchilla to roll in the dust for 10 to 15 minutes several times a week. Chinchilla dust can be purchased at most pet stores.

Diet:

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- Chinchilla pellets and unlimited timothy grass provide an adequate diet.
- Treats should be given sparingly. These can include dried fruits, nuts, various green vegetables and fresh carrots.

Health:

- Chinchillas are very susceptible to heat stroke at temperatures of 80 degrees plus.
- Regular visits to the veterinarian are recommended for your chinchilla. Wellness check ups are necessary to recognize potential disease and treat it early.
- A chinchilla's front teeth never stop growing. It is important to give them healthy things to chew on. Chew sticks and other toys should always be kept in the cage.
- Signs of a healthy chinchilla include teeth and claws even, not overgrown; nostrils free of discharge; no matting or missing patches of fur; pink foot pads, no evidence of sores; bright, shiny eyes free of discharge; no sneezing, wheezing or labored breathing; no abnormal lumps or scabs; good body weight, neither thin nor obese; alert, inquisitive nature.
- Things to watch for include decreased appetite, overgrowth of front teeth, diarrhea, hair-loss, wounds on foot pads, lethargy, weight loss, crusts around the eyes, sneezing and blood in the urine.

If any of these signs are noticed, have your chinchilla examined by a veterinarian.