

Caring for Your Hamster

Lifespan: 1 ½ - 2 years, males tend to live longer

Hamsters are nocturnal and usually sleep all day. They must be kept indoors at an even temperature of 16-21°C. (60-70°F). If kept singly, the most common Golden Hamster must be housed alone, as they will fight. A hamster is a highly active animal and needs as interesting home environment as possible with a solid exercise wheel.

Hamsters need gentle, careful handling as they have a delicate bone structure and are short-sighted. Taming needs patience, easiest in young animals but they may nip at first. When lifting use cupped hands.

A well balanced diet of pellets, grains, and vegetables is essential to keep your hamster healthy. It will fill up its cheek pouches with food to hoard away and eat later. Fresh water should be given daily from a plastic bottle with a steel nozzle.

If you have to buy a cage, choose a large plastic one. Metal cages are not recommended as they provide no insulation against heat, cold. The floor of the cage should be covered with a layer of shavings or and topped with hay, shredded paper or natural wood fibre for nest making. Daily cleaning will involve removing waste and cleaning out the damp corner. The cage should be cleaned once a week.