



# Caring for Your CHINCHILLA

This care guide from Oxbow Animal Health will teach you everything you need to know about keeping your pet chinchilla healthy and happy.



## FEEDING YOUR CHINCHILLA

*Your chinchilla is a herbivore, which means he eats only plant material.*

Grass hay should be the high-fiber cornerstone of every chinchilla's diet. The fiber in hay helps meet the important digestive health and dental needs of herbivores such as chinchillas. A daily recommended amount of a uniform, fortified food provides essential vitamins and minerals not found in hay. Fresh greens are also an important component of a chinchilla's diet, and healthy treats can be beneficial when given in moderation.



## HAY

Your chinchilla should have unlimited access to a variety of quality grass hays. Among many benefits, hay helps prevent obesity, boredom, and dental and gastrointestinal disease. Since replacing the hay in your chinchilla's habitat can encourage picky eating, we recommend changing it only when soiled.

Young (less than a year old), pregnant, nursing, or ill animals can benefit from eating alfalfa hay in addition to grass hay because of the higher nutritional elements. Otherwise, alfalfa should only be given occasionally as a treat.

### Hay Selection

**Keep in mind:** Grass hay should make up the majority of your pet's daily diet. Offer a variety of hay to your chinchilla to promote optimum health. Since hay is a natural product, each bag will look and feel different. Use our Taste & Texture Guide located on every hay package to determine your pet's taste and texture preferences.

We have many all-natural farm-fresh hays to choose from including Western Timothy, Orchard Grass, Oat Hay, Botanical Hay, Organic Meadow Hay, and Hay Blends - Western Timothy & Orchard. Also, check out our Harvest Stacks line of compressed hays for extra enrichment.



## DID YOU KNOW?

*Your chinchilla's teeth never stop growing. Hay is essential because it stimulates normal chewing and dental wear patterns, helping decrease the risk of dental disease.*



## FORTIFIED FOOD

*Providing a daily recommended amount of a high-fiber, complete fortified food will help ensure that your pet receives essential vitamins and minerals not found in hay.*

### Pellet Selection

Always choose a complete fortified pellet formulated specifically for chinchillas. Choose from one of Oxbow's two premium chinchilla formulas.



### AVOID:

Mixes with nuts, corn, seeds, and fruit because chinchillas have a tendency to select those tempting morsels over the healthy pellets



## GREENS

Fresh greens are a vital part of your pet's daily diet. Greens contribute to hydration and provide necessary vitamins and minerals, as well as enrichment. Check with your qualified exotics veterinarian for a full list of appropriate greens. A good starter list of varieties to offer and avoid includes:

### OFFER:

Romaine, bib, and red leaf lettuce



### AVOID:

Leeks, chives, and onions

## TREATS

Treats (including fruits and veggies) are great for encouraging interaction between you and your pet, but they should only be given after daily foods have been eaten. Offering too many treats can cause your chinchilla to refuse his healthy, essential foods as well as put him at risk for illness. It's important to remember that not all treats are created equal! All Oxbow treat varieties are designed to be as wholesome as they are delicious.



## CHINCHILLA BEHAVIOR

*Chinchillas are active, playful animals that bond quickly with their owners.*

Some chinchilla behaviors can seem rather strange. For example, you may see your chinchilla eat its own poop. This is a normal, healthy behavior that provides essential vitamins and nutrients. Also, chinchillas can release tufts of hair as a defense mechanism. If this happens, don't worry! It will grow back. As creatures of habit, chinchillas need to be introduced to changes slowly in regards to feedings and routines.

**Chinchillas are  
AFFECTIONATE  
& INTELLIGENT  
by nature.**



## CHINCHILLA DUST BATH

Due to the density of chinchillas' fur and their naturally oily skin, they should have access to a dust bath as opposed to water. Use Oxbow's Poof! Chinchilla Dust Bath to ensure a safe dust bath time that is ideal for maintaining your chinchilla's soft fur.



## YOUR CHINCHILLA'S HEALTH

*You should visit a qualified exotics veterinarian at least once a year for check-ups on your chinchilla's diet, behavior, and health.*

Be prepared for your pet's visits by making a list of any questions or concerns you may have ahead of time. Ask your veterinarian about the potential of spaying or neutering your chinchilla. Many chinchilla health problems are preventable with proper diet and care. To locate a qualified exotics veterinarian near you, visit [aemv.org](http://aemv.org).

### REASONS TO CONTACT YOUR VET:

- Loose, soft, or lack of stool
- Small, dry, or infrequent stools
- Blood in the urine
- Overgrown front teeth
- Hunching in a corner or lack of activity (lethargy)
- Sneezing or trouble breathing
- Observed difficulty chewing
- Bald patches in the fur
- Sores on the feet
- Abnormal eating or drinking



## DID YOU KNOW?

*Chinchillas are extremely sensitive to heat. Keep your pet's habitat between 60°F and 70°F with low humidity.*

## HOUSING YOUR CHINCHILLA

*Chinchillas need a safe place that allows enough room to climb, jump, and explore, as well as to escape potential environmental stressors.*

Chinchillas love to get vertical, so choose a multi-level habitat for these athletic adventurers. Choose a well-constructed habitat with a solid floor and set it up near household activities, but away from drafts. Your chinchilla's habitat should be outfitted with environmental essentials such as a space to hide (Timothy CLUB Bungalow or Tunnel), a litter box lined with litter and bedding (Pure Comfort bedding layered on top of Eco-Straw litter), some toys, grass hay, a food bowl, and two sources of fresh, clean water. Dust baths should be offered regularly, but the dust bath house should not be a permanent structure in your chinchilla's habitat. The confines of a habitat do not allow enough space for a pet's exercise needs. All animals benefit from activity and love to move and explore; a play yard allows you to create a safe, secure exercise area for your pet.

### AVOID:

Aromatic cedar and pine shavings that may contain resin and could irritate your pet's lungs and skin



## SUPPLIES FOR YOUR CHINCHILLA

- ☐ **Fortified food:** choose one of Oxbow's two premium formulas
- ☐ Two or more varieties of **Oxbow's farm-fresh hays**
- ☐ **Oxbow treats** for healthy bonding and enrichment
- ☐ **Water bottle** and heavy **water dish**
- ☐ Heavy **food bowl**
- ☐ **Large, multi-level habitat** with solid, non-slip flooring
- ☐ **Hiding space** such as Oxbow's Timothy CLUB Bungalow or Tunnel
- ☐ **Litter box**
- ☐ **Litter and bedding material** such as Oxbow's Eco-Straw and Pure Comfort Bedding
- ☐ **Large play yard** for safe exercise outside the habitat
- ☐ **Dust bath house** and Oxbow's Poof! Chinchilla Dust Bath

For more information about your chinchilla's nutrition and behaviors, visit [www.oxbowanimalhealth.com](http://www.oxbowanimalhealth.com).



Oxbow Animal Health  
Omaha, Nebraska

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