Caring for Your 
HAMSTER OR GERBIL

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

FEEDING YOUR HAMSTER OR GERBIL

Your hamster or gerbil is an omnivore, which means he eats both plant and animal material.

Your hamster or gerbil requires a simple diet composed of a complete fortified food, fresh water served in both a sipper bottle and tip-proof dish (although gerbils drink very little water), and veggies, greens, and fruits in appropriate daily amounts.

FORTIFIED FOOD

A daily recommended amount of a high-fiber, fortified food should make up approximately 75% of your pet’s daily diet.

A complete fortified food such as Oxbow’s Essentials Hamster and Gerbil Food contains all-natural grass and whole grain ingredients, which is the best option for your hamster or gerbil. All Oxbow foods are uniform, offering complete nutrition in every bite.

AVOID:

Mixes with nuts, seeds, and dried fruit because hamsters and gerbils have a tendency to select those tempting morsels over the healthy food pieces.

VEGGIES, GREENS, & FRUITS

Veggies, greens, and fruits are an important part of your hamster or gerbil’s daily diet. These items offer important vitamins and nutrients, contribute to hydration, and provide enrichment to your pet’s daily routine. Check with your qualified exotics veterinarian for a full list of appropriate veggies, greens, and fruit choices. A good starter list of varieties to offer and avoid includes:

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<th>OFFER:</th>
<th>AVOID:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Romaine, kale, parsley, apples (without seeds), strawberries, bananas, peas, and squash</td>
<td>Leeks, chives, and onions</td>
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TREATS

Treats are great for encouraging interaction between you and your pet, but they should only be given after basic daily foods have been eaten. Offering too many treats can cause your hamster or gerbil to refuse his healthy, essential foods. 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.

DID YOU KNOW?

Small amounts of high-quality seeds, such as oats, sunflower seeds, barley, and cooked brown rice make great treats for hamsters and gerbils.

Hay

Supply grass hay to stimulate natural foraging and nesting, which helps in the prevention of obesity. Hamsters and gerbils especially enjoy Oat Hay, which often contains tasty immature seed heads.

Hay Selection

Use our Taste & Texture Guide located on every hay package to determine your pet’s 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.
**HAMSTERS & GERBILS**

Hamsters and gerbils both love to chew.

Provide hay, a wood block, or an empty toilet paper roll to satisfy this natural behavior. Both hamsters and gerbils commonly hide food throughout their cages.

While hamsters and gerbils are similar, they have some specific behavioral differences:

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<th>HAMSTERS:</th>
<th>GERBILS:</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Nocturnal, should be gently handled if picked up while sleeping</td>
<td>• Active, fast, and rarely bite when correctly handled</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Single animals do fine, or can be kept in pairs depending on the breed and sex</td>
<td>• Social animals and do well in pairs</td>
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Hamsters & gerbils are ADVENTUROUS & CURIOUS by nature.

**YOUR HAMSTER OR GERBIL’S HEALTH**

You should visit a qualified exotic veterinarian at least once a year for check-ups on your hamster or gerbil’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. Many hamster and gerbil health problems are preventable with proper diet and care. To locate a qualified exotic veterinarian near you, visit aemv.org.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>REASONS TO CONTACT YOUR VET:</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Wet or soiled tail</td>
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<td>• Blood in the urine</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Sneezing or trouble breathing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Hunching in a corner or lack of activity (lethargy)</td>
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**REASONS TO CONTACT YOUR VET:**

- Overgrown front teeth
- Bald patches in the fur
- Lumps or sores on the body
- Sores on the feet
- Abnormal eating or drinking

**SUPPLIES FOR YOUR HAMSTER OR GERBIL**

- A complete fortified food formulated specifically for hamsters and gerbils. Choose one of Oxbow’s two premium formulas.
- Variety of Oxbow’s grass hays for nesting
- Oxbow treats for healthy bonding and enrichment
- A mix of healthy, high-quality veggies, fruits, and seeds
- Heavy food bowl
- Water bottle and heavy water dish
- Cage designed specifically for hamsters or gerbils
- Wheel, tube, and hay accessory such as Oxbow’s Timothy CLUB Hideout, Bungalow, or Tunnel for hiding and playing
- Oxbow’s Pure Comfort Bedding

For more information about your hamster or gerbil’s nutrition and behaviors, visit www.oxbowanimalhealth.com.