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## Greens and Vegetables and Treats

**Vegetables:** Guinea pigs can have up to one cup of vegetables each day. New vegetables should be introduced to your pet one at a time. Fresh, organically grown greens are the best option. Vegetables that your pet guinea pig can eat include:

- Romaine lettuce (never iceberg lettuce)
- Carrots and carrot tops
- Peas
- Broccoli spears
- Spinach
- Artichokes
- Kale
- Tomatoes (not the stems or leaves)
- Green and red bell peppers
- Other dark green veggies

These veggies provide vitamins and minerals that are beneficial to your guinea pig's overall health. Wash all produce thoroughly to remove traces of harmful pesticides and avoid serving vegetables cold.

**Fruits:** Generally speaking, aim to feed fewer fruits than vegetables, due to the higher sugar content. Small, bite-sized portions of fruit served daily will delight your guinea pig and provide much-needed Vitamin C. Fruits guinea pigs can eat include:

- Oranges
- Apples
- Pears
- Strawberries
- Blueberries
- Kiwi
- Papayas
- Peaches
- Cucumbers

Remember to also thoroughly wash all fruits before serving them to your guinea pig and avoid serving fruit cold.

**Treats & chews:** It's recommended that treats (including fruit) not exceed 10 percent of your guinea pig's total food intake. Some commercially produced treats contain artificial sweeteners, sugar or salt, so carefully read labels when selecting healthy options for your pet.

Since your guinea pig's teeth grow continuously, you should provide a variety of fun chews, including sticks, toys, balls, blocks and treats made especially for small animals. Not only are they fun for your guinea pig to chew on, they also help to relieve boredom. Another treat option is a small animal salt lick, which is a rich source of healthy minerals and is a healthy way to satisfy your guinea pig's desire for salt.

**Cecotropes:** Nature has provided guinea pigs with an unusual method for supplementing their unique nutritional needs. Cecotropes are small, soft pellets that contain nutrients absorbed from plants during the digestive process. They pass from the large intestine, out the anus and are consumed immediately. While this process may look bizarre or even revolting, you must not discourage it as cecotropes are a necessary part of your guinea pig's diet.



# Foods Guinea Pigs Cannot Eat

There are several types of foods that you should avoid giving your guinea pig, for various reasons. Some foods can be poisonous, some are too high in fat or sugar, some are a choking hazard, some have no nutritional value, some can cause gas and some can cause bloat. You can refer to books on guinea pig care or reputable websites (such as the ASPCA), but ideally, you should consult an exotic animal veterinarian or a veterinarian that specializes in small animals for nutritional guidelines. A short list of the foods to avoid feeding your guinea pig includes:

- Chocolate (or anything else containing caffeine)
- Onions
- Garlic
- Mushrooms
- Iceberg lettuce
- Avocados
- Nuts
- Potatoes
- Seeds
- Corn kernels
- Peanut butter
- Rhubarb
- Cabbage
- Bok choy
- Dairy products
- Bread
- Meat

You should also never offer your guinea pig any plants, flowers or grass from your yard or garden as they may contain pesticides or other hazards; many houseplants are also toxic, so always supervise your little pet when they are out of their habitat.



# Scurvy in guinea pigs and the need for Vitamin C

Guinea pigs have an increased risk of developing a Vitamin C deficiency called scurvy due to their inability to synthesize the vitamin. To combat scurvy, your guinea pig needs 30–50 mg of Vitamin C daily. Pellets and treats fortified with Vitamin C should provide your guinea pig's daily needed intake, but there are also additional options. While you can provide Vitamin C in liquid or tablet form, these options are less-commonly used. Supplementing with treats in the form of citrus fruits and vegetables allows you to provide Vitamin C from natural sources, while still giving him the opportunity to enjoy the diversity and fulfillment that comes from a well-balanced diet.

**If you ever notice anything out of the ordinary with your guinea pig, take them to their veterinarian right away.** Signs of possible illness include sneezing, crusty eyes, weight loss, hair loss and diarrhea. With proper care, you can expect your guinea pig to live up to eight years. Like any other pet, it's important for your guinea pig to get annual check-ups. Consult with your veterinarian to ensure that your guinea pig is getting the proper nutrition they need.



Information was provided by our friends at [Petco](#)