

The 5 Welfare Needs of Hamsters



Behaviour



Hamsters are nocturnal, meaning they're up and about and active at night! Try not to disturb them too much during the day (you wouldn't like being woken up to play in the middle of the night, after all!). Fill their homes with lots of things to entertain them, including a solid hamster wheel, tunnels, places to climb and explore, and they'll need regular time out of their cage to play, too.

Company



There are different breeds of hamster, but a lot of them prefer to live alone rather than with other hamsters. Always check with an expert before deciding whether to give them a friend for company or not - they may hate it!



Diet



Hamsters are omnivores, so in the wild, they'd eat a mix of plants and insects. Hamsters hoard their food - they'll stock up, filling up their cheek pouches, and then bury food around their home to eat later! The best mix of food for your hamster includes pellets (not a muesli mix - they pick out their fave bits and end up eating all the high sugar stuff!), a little bit of fresh fruit, veg and herbs, good quality Timothy hay, and the odd treat such as nuts, boiled egg or mealworms. And of course, constant access to clean water in a water bottle.



Environment



Hamsters are really active animals - in the wild, they can travel miles at night! So, they need a home fit for purpose! Give them lots of space to explore, cosy nest boxes and sleeping areas, gnawing blocks to help wear their teeth down (their teeth constantly grow) and places to dig and burrow. Their cage should be kept in a quiet part of the house - they can get very stressed by lots of noise!

Health



It's a good idea to perform a little health check on your hamster every time they come out of their cage to play - if you can, do this every day! If you notice your hamster isn't eating, is sleeping a lot at night and is not as active as normal, always give your vet a call for some advice.

