



# Caring for Your HAMSTER OR GERBIL

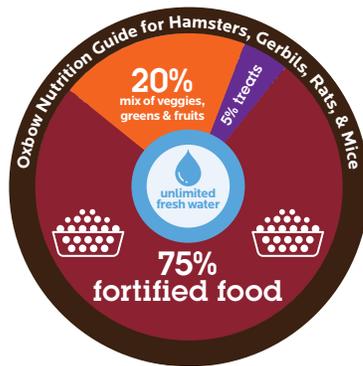
This care guide from Oxbow Animal Health will teach you everything you need to know about keeping your pet hamster or gerbil healthy and happy.



## FEEDING YOUR HAMSTER OR GERBIL

Your hamster or gerbil is an omnivore, which means he eats meat and plant 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 and fruits in appropriate daily amounts.



## 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, and Organic Meadow Hay. Also, check out our Harvest Stacks line of compressed hays for extra enrichment.

## 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



## 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.



## VEGGIES & FRUITS

Veggies 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 veggie and fruit choices.



## 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.

## HAMSTER AND GERBIL BEHAVIOR

*Hamsters and gerbils both love to chew on everything.*

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:**

| HAMSTERS:   | GERBILS:  |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nocturnal, should be gently handled if picked up while sleeping</li> <li>Single animals do fine and can be kept in pairs depending on the breed and sex</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Active, fast, and rarely bite when correctly handled</li> <li>Social animals and do well in pairs</li> </ul> |

*Hamsters & gerbils are*  
**ADVENTUROUS**  
*& CURIOUS*  
*by nature.*



## YOUR HAMSTER OR GERBIL'S HEALTH

*You should visit a qualified exotics 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.

### REASONS TO CONTACT YOUR VET:

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|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wet or soiled tail</li> <li>Blood in the urine</li> <li>Sneezing or trouble breathing</li> <li>Hunching in a corner or lack of activity (lethargy)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overgrown front teeth</li> <li>Bald patches in the fur</li> <li>Lumps or sores on the body</li> <li>Sores on the feet</li> <li>Abnormal eating or drinking</li> </ul> |
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## HOUSING YOUR HAMSTER OR GERBIL

*Hamsters and gerbils require adequate space to foster creative living, playing, and burrowing.*

Your pet's cage or aquarium environment should include bedding such as Oxbow's *Pure Comfort Bedding*, places to hide such as *Timothy CLUB Bungalow, Hideout, or Tunnel*, cardboard tubes, an exercise wheel, and grass hay for burrowing and nesting. Hamsters and gerbils should not be exposed to temperatures that are too hot or cold. Place your pet's habitat away from heating and cooling ducts and windows.

**Because of the difference in their behaviors, hamsters and gerbils have specific housing requirements:**

| HAMSTERS:  | GERBILS:  |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can live in a variety of cages including wire cages and glass aquariums</li> <li><b>AVOID:</b> Plastic aquariums and cages, as your hamster can easily chew through it</li> <li>Wire cages should have a solid bottom and wires that are close together to avoid your pet escaping</li> <li>Ensure that the door of the cage is large enough for you to reach your hand inside</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Choose clear glass or plastic aquariums to accommodate natural burrowing</li> <li>Equip aquarium with a secure mesh top to ensure healthy airflow</li> </ul> |



## SUPPLIES FOR YOUR HAMSTER OR GERBIL

- A complete fortified food formulated specifically for hamsters and gerbils

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- Variety of Oxbow's **grass hays** for nesting

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- Oxbow treats** for healthy bonding and enrichment

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- A mix of healthy, high-quality **veggies, fruits, and seeds**

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- Heavy **food bowl**

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- Water bottle** and heavy **water dish**

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- Cage** designed specifically for hamsters or gerbils

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- Wheel, tube, and hay habitat** such as Oxbow's *Timothy CLUB Hideout, Bungalow, or Tunnel* for hiding and playing

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- Oxbow's **Pure Comfort Bedding**

For more information about hamster and gerbil nutrition and behaviors, visit [www.oxbowanimalhealth.com](http://www.oxbowanimalhealth.com).



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### Join the CONVERSATION

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