



Paws for Thought Pet Centres

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Caring for your Gerbil

Congratulations on purchasing your new Gerbil from Paws for Thought.

We pride ourselves on being voted Best Independent Pet Centre in the U.K by "Which" Magazine.

If in the first few days of your Gerbil coming home you are concerned about his health or well being please do not hesitate to contact us. We are open seven days a week and often a quick phone call can put your mind at ease.

We hope your Gerbil will bring lots of fun, happiness and companionship for the next few years. Here are just a few handy pointers to help you on your way.

HANDLING

Your new gerbil may be nervous at first. Talk to him and handle him carefully. Do not drop him and never leave him on a table or other high places. Pick him up carefully by scooping him up with two hands.

HOUSING

We have a wide variety of cages and tanks available suitable for gerbils. Avoid cages that uses plastic in their construction as Gerbils are expert gnawers and ingesting plastic can make them seriously ill. The same goes for the tank furnishings.

Give your gerbil an exercise wheel to keep him active, but choose one with a solid back so he does not trap his tail as it revolves. You will then need to cover the base of the cage. From experience we have found that a good depth of wood based cat litter or shavings is far superior to sawdust which can be dusty and may irritate your gerbils eyes (because Gerbils like to burrow). Provide him with suitable bedding but do not give him cotton or nylon material as he will eat them and make himself ill. The same applies with newspaper. Clean out the cage frequently to keep him healthy.

If you decide to keep more than one and do not want to breed, then choose litter mates. Two female will get along and two males should be all right. Be prepared to separate if they get rough.

Do not place them in a draught or in direct sunlight.

FEEDING

Feed a mixture of seeds, grains and pellets. If he picks out the sunflower and leaves the rest, choose a mixture which does not contain these seeds (They are not a balanced diet on their own). Give a few seeds as a treat. Provide him with small amounts of fresh fruit and vegetables for the essential roughage and vitamins he needs.

Do not feed him mouldy greens. Citrus fruit is a bit acidic for him so only feed in small quantities. Never give sweets, biscuits, salted nuts as the sugar will make his teeth decay, salt will damage his kidneys. Use dishes he cannot chew and clean them regularly. Water should be offered in a bottle, gerbils drink very little but should always have some available.

GENERAL HEALTH

All our animals are given a health check before being put on sale. If fed properly and cleaned, he should remain healthy and give you lots of pleasure. Your gerbils tail is very vulnerable so please take care. His teeth are growing constantly and may overgrow so check them on a regular basis.

If you see any signs of diarrhoea please contact us immediately as this can be very serious and you may need to take him to the vet.

Though not essential, gerbils, like chinchillas, will benefit from sand baths.