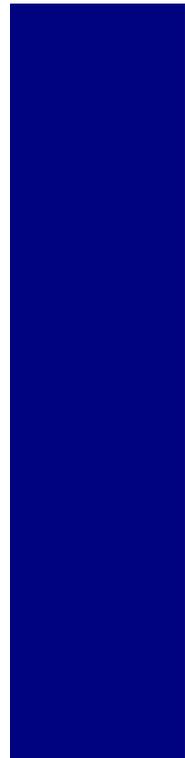


BCSPCA

PET-FRIENDLY HOUSING TOOLKIT

Animal Care Resources



Animal Care Resources

Basic Care Guides:

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Animal Care Resources

Issue Specific Guides:

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CARING FOR YOUR CAT

FOOD & WATER

FOOD

Dry cat food available at pet food stores will provide your cat with a well-balanced diet. Kittens should be fed kitten food until about one year old. Some cats may require a special diet due to medical conditions. It's always best to talk to a veterinarian if you need help.

Canned food is a good supplement and might make mealtime more delicious for picky eaters. If you use canned food, don't forget to cut down on the dry food.

How much should you feed?

Follow instructions on the bag and split the daily portion into two or three meals per day. Cats prefer multiple small meals throughout the day.

Have more than one cat? Some cats are okay to share food but make sure each has access. You may need to have multiple dishes around your home so that your cats can eat and drink safely.



WATER

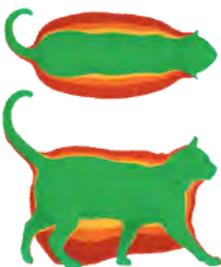
Your cat should always have access to clean water. Change the water daily and wash out the bowl regularly.

TREATS

Treats made for cats are perfect for training and rewarding good behaviours. It's okay to feed treats but too many can cause health concerns. Try portioning out treats each day to help manage overfeeding.



WATCH THEIR WEIGHT!



Extra weight sometimes seems cute but it is bad for your cats's health. Your cat's ribs should be easily felt when you're petting them but you should not be able to see them through their fur. If your cat is getting a little heavy, cut down on the food or if your cat is able, encourage them to be more active. Having trouble bringing their weight down? Talk to a veterinarian – something else might be going on.

Keep your cat in the green zone!

ENCOURAGE MORE PLAY

Cats love to climb. Provide them a tall cat tree or the opportunity to safely jump onto furniture.

Have play sessions with a wand toy or catnip ball.

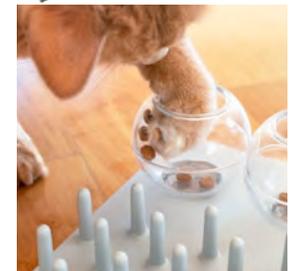
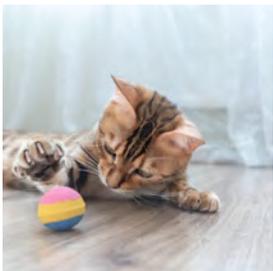
Try puzzle feeders or make your own with a toilet paper roll.

Cats are natural hunters! Place or hide multiple bowls around your home with pre-portioned kibble. Your cat will enjoy the hunt!



Make-at-home cat toy:

- one toilet paper roll
- cut a couple of holes
- fold in ends
- insert kibble or treats!



TOO SKINNY?

Your cat can also be too skinny. You should not be able to see ribs or their spine through their skin and fur. If your cat is not gaining weight, consult with a veterinarian.

BCSPCA

CARING FOR YOUR CAT HOME ENVIRONMENT

Your cat needs a comfortable environment that is well ventilated and includes protection from heat, cold and damp.

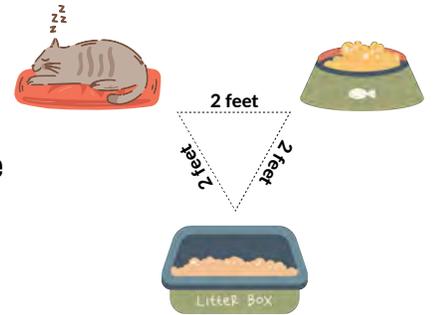
Your home should include:

- A variety of places to rest (e.g., bare floor, beds, blanket, tile)
- Floor space and the freedom to move about
- Areas for your cat to hide
- Places for your cat to perch and chill
- The opportunity to move up and down, climb and jump
- Surfaces to scratch
- Separation of food/water, resting areas and litter



THE TWO-FOOT RULE

Cats need space between where they eat and drink, rest and use the litter box. Leave **at least two feet** of distance between these areas.



TOXIC PLANTS



If eaten or chewed, many plants can be harmful to cats. While some cats may show no interest, kittens and many cats may not be able to resist. A short list includes: lilies, cyclamen, poison hemlock, tulips, irises, oleander, daffodils and kalanchoe. Bringing a new plant or flowers into your home? Protect your cat and do a quick search online to see if it's safe for your cat.



Lily



Cyclamen



Poison Hemlock



Tulip



Oleander



Kalanchoe

DRUGS & PARAPHERNALIA

Cats are curious, and kittens can be mischievous. Watch your cat closely and keep them away from drugs, used foils or cookers. **Keep paraphernalia out of reach of your pets.**

Get a plastic shoe box with a snap-on lid to store your drugs and stuff.

Suspect your cat got into something? Call a veterinarian or emergency clinic for advice. If you know your pet has gotten into opioids and see signs of poisoning, **naloxone can be given to pets** and should be administered right away. If it's a stimulant, you can't reverse this – take your pet to a vet immediately.

Do not give your cat any human meds (like Tylenol, Advil, Aspirin, etc.) unless you have talked to a vet.

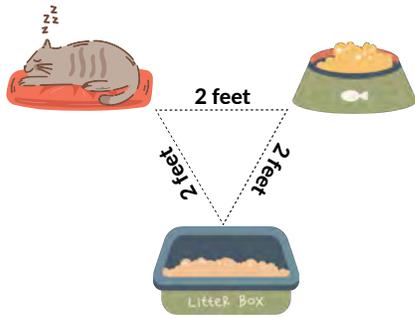


CARING FOR YOUR CAT HOME ENVIRONMENT

LITTER BOX Q & A

Do I need to train my cat to use the litter box?

Cats do not need much house training. Even as kittens, instinct tells them to use a litter box!

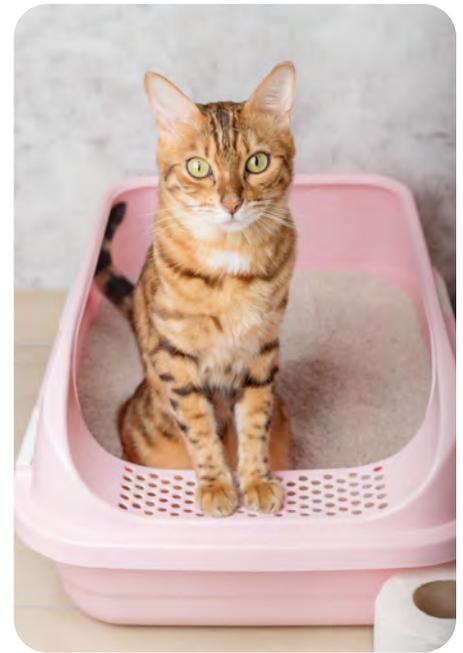


Where should the litter box go?

Cats like privacy. Choose a quiet and accessible area that offers an escape route. Keep it away from resting and eating areas. Remember the Two-Foot Rule!

How many litter boxes do I need?

Have **one litter box per cat** and if you have the space, it's good to have an extra one!

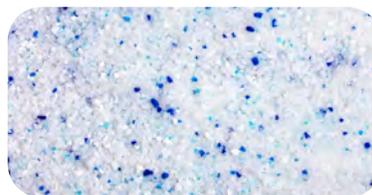


Which litter box do I choose?

There are many options available. Cats need a box that is at least one and a half times longer than themselves and is wide enough to turn around in. Boxes with lids offer privacy and may be nicer for you, but they also trap smells and generally provide only one way in and out. Make sure you clean the box more if your box has a lid.

What type of litter should I use?

There are lots of options, and some cats are pickier than others. It may take some time to figure out what your cat likes best. Cats generally prefer litter that is **unscented** and small grains over larger pellet types.



Always wash your hands after handling and scooping litter!

HELPFUL TIPS

How much litter do I need?

Cats like to dig. Give them about 2 to 3 inches of litter. This will give them a chance to cover their poop!

How often should I clean the litter box?

Scoop your litter boxes **once or twice a day**. Once a month, give the litter box a good wash with warm, soapy water. Cats have super sensitive noses so if you think the litter box smells, imagine how your cat feels. Avoid using strong smelling cleaning products as well.



My cat keeps peeing and/or pooping OUTSIDE of the box. What can I do?

There are a number of reasons this could be happening. Some tips to encourage your cat to use the litter box:

- Clean it more often
- Change the litter (try something unscented or different size grains, as some cats don't like clumping litter)
- Change the location of the litter box (move it away from anything noisy that might scare your cat)
- Try adding another litter box
- Try giving it a good wash with a product like Nature's Miracle or Urine Off in case it smells like another cat
- Tidy up your space to remove the option for your cat to choose something other than the litter box (sometimes cats prefer a piece of plastic or soft surfaces like a t-shirt)



Still need help? Consult with a veterinarian to rule out a medical issue.

CARING FOR YOUR CAT HEALTH

PARASITES



FLEAS

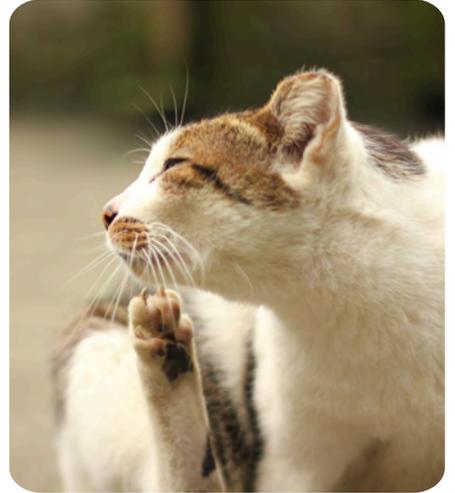
Fleas are tiny (1 to 3 mm) blood-sucking insects. They multiply quickly and can make your pet sick if left untreated. Fleas will bite people too!

How do I know if my cat has fleas?

Your cat will be itchy, and you might notice them scratch more than usual. Check your pet's belly where you might see fleas crawling. Gently pull apart the fur to expose the skin and check for what looks like pepper or coffee grinds – this is actually bits of dried blood!

How do I treat fleas?

Flea collars and powders may help but are not very effective. A monthly pill or topical liquids applied to the skin prescribed by your veterinarian can help stamp out fleas.



WARNING: Flea medication

You can find flea treatments for dogs at pet stores that contain **permethrin**, which is okay for dogs but **poisonous to cats!** Do not share treatments with other pets.

WORMS (including tapeworms, whipworms and roundworms)

Worms from your cat can be transferred to people! **GROSS.** It's important to look out for signs of worms and get them treated by a veterinarian right away.

Signs of worms? You might see them in the poop or vomit. In some cases, you might see them crawling out of a cat's bum, or you might see eggs (clear, rice-shaped) in their bedding. But don't worry – there is a simple fix. Medication for worms can be obtained from your vet.



EAR MITES & EAR INFECTIONS

Ear mites are teeny-tiny creatures that live inside your pet's ears. They are common and contagious. If one pet has ear mites, it's likely that they all do.

How to detect if your cat has ear mites?

Your cat may rub their ears on the ground and shake their heads. You may even see a brown, waxy or crusty buildup in your cat's ear. This could be ear mites or a bacterial or yeast infection.

Ear mites and infections can be diagnosed and treated with medication prescribed by a veterinarian.

TOXOPLASMOSIS

Toxoplasmosis is an infection caused by a tiny parasite that can infect people and animals. Most healthy people and animals won't get sick. Your cat could infect you through contact with their poop, but this is rare. People are much more likely to get it from handling and/or eating raw or undercooked food and unwashed fruits and vegetables.

Pregnant women (it can affect the baby) and people with compromised immune systems are more at risk, but you can reduce risk by wearing gloves and washing your hands after handling litter.

If you have concerns about your health, talk to your doctor.



BCSPCA

CARING FOR YOUR CAT HEALTH

GROOMING



FUR
Your cat's fur should look clean, groomed and free from debris. Cats generally keep themselves clean, but regular brushing helps to prevent fur from matting (getting tangled) and removes loose fur – especially for longer-haired cats. Regular grooming will also prevent your cat from throwing up hairballs.



NAILS
Your cat's nails need to be trimmed about once a month.



IDENTIFICATION

If your cat ever gets lost, make sure they have proper ID in the form of a collar and tags, microchip or tattoo, which can be done by a veterinarian during the time of spay or neuter.



MYTH BUSTING

Does a microchip act like a tracker or global positioning device (GPS)?

ANSWER: NO! Microchips use radio frequency and are only activated when scanned by a special device. They only provide information stored in the microchip – your contact information to help get your cat back to you!

EQUIPMENT

CAT COLLARS



If your cat goes outside, make sure they have a collar with ID tag and make sure the collar has a quick-release buckle. This will keep your outdoor explorer safe from getting caught on anything.

CAT HARNESSES & LEASHES

Walking cats on a leash is possible! If you are willing to get your cat used to wearing a harness and going out to explore, it can be very enjoyable for both you and your cat.

Some tips:

- Start in your home and slowly move to different rooms or quiet indoor spaces
- When you go out, start with short sessions in quiet places
- Bring a soft-sided carrier with you so that if your cat gets scared, they can quickly hide inside
- Make sure your cat has ID



CARING FOR YOUR CAT HEALTH



SPAY/NEUTER

BENEFITS

- Neutered cats are less likely to spray, wander and get into fights
- Spaying ends the heat cycle in females, so no more yowling, spraying or trying to escape
- Eliminates the risk of many cancers
- Studies show that fixed pets, on average, live longer

PREVENT UNWANTED LITTERS

Kittens can have kittens! Start keeping unfixed males and females apart at four months old. **GET YOUR KITTEN FIXED BY SIX MONTHS OLD.**

It's irresponsible to breed your cat. Without proper support from a veterinarian throughout the pregnancy, you put your cat's health at risk. When your cat gives birth, you need to be able to access an emergency clinic in case anything goes wrong. When kittens are born, they need proper monitoring and should see a vet by six weeks of age or sooner if any issues arise.

MEDICAL CARE



It's recommended that your cat have a check-up once a year with a veterinarian. If not, watch out for lumps and bumps, changes to your cat's eating and washroom habits, and other changes in their behaviour and routines. If you notice something different, get in touch with a veterinarian.

VACCINES

Vaccines protect your cat from getting diseases that are contagious and potentially fatal. Vaccinating your cat offers protection for your cat and cats in the community. When you get your cat or when a kitten turns six weeks old, visit your veterinarian for a check-up and vaccine plan.

Kittens should start their vaccines at six to eight weeks of age. They will need a series of vaccines before they reach four months old. Schedules for adult cats may vary depending on lifestyle and vaccines needed.

COMMON CAT VACCINES

- FVRCP (feline viral rhinotracheitis, calicivirus, panleukopenia)
- Feline Leukemia
- Rabies

DEWORMING

Cats can get all sorts of different intestinal worms and some may be transferred to humans! Talk to your veterinarian about regular treatments to prevent worms.



CARING FOR YOUR CAT

KEEPING YOUR CAT HAPPY

Cats love to play, explore, run around, use a scratching post and spend time with you. These are all essential activities for cats. Set up your home so your cat can explore, run and scratch on a scratching post.

Make time in your day to play with your cat with a variety of toys. Keep you and your loved ones safe and avoid using your hands as a toy.



TOYS & GAMES

There are lots of toys to choose from. Pick a variety and roll, bat and wave them around to encourage your cat to play.

Cats love to hunt. **Hide treats or kibble** around your home for your cat to find.

Food puzzles will make mealtime more fun and encourage your cat to use their mind and work for their food.

Plant a pot of indoor greens for your cat to munch on such as cat grass from seeds (oat, rye, wheat, barley) or catnip.



SCRATCHING

Provide your cat a scratching post and toys. Put it near doorways, a window or hang them from a piece of furniture your cat likes to scratch.



PERCHING

Cats love to perch up high, especially by a window! Check your local pet store for a cat perch that you can install on your window.



HIDING

Sometimes cats just need to get away from it all. Give your cat plenty of places to hide, like cardboard boxes, cupboards and paper bags.



BCSPCA

CARING FOR YOUR CAT

LIVING WITH INTACT CATS

KITTENS CAN HAVE KITTENS!

Cats can start reproducing at 5 to 9 months of age, which is when you may start to see hormone-driven behaviour problems. It is recommended to **separate intact females and males at four months old**. Unwanted behaviours in intact cats include humping, urine marking (also known as spraying), yowling and roaming.



The best way to tackle these unwanted behaviours is to get your cat spayed or neutered.



FEMALE HEAT CYCLES

Females have **heat cycles several times a year** and each can last from **4 to 20 days**. Signs include:

- She is suddenly more friendly and starts to seek more attention
- When you pet her, she presents her rear end
- She rolls around on the ground more
- Marking behaviour with her cheeks or urine (spraying)
- Unusual yowling, especially at night, restlessness and less interest in food

INTACT MALES

Intact males will be on the prowl all the time and are more likely to spray and they will hump other animals, people or objects like furniture.



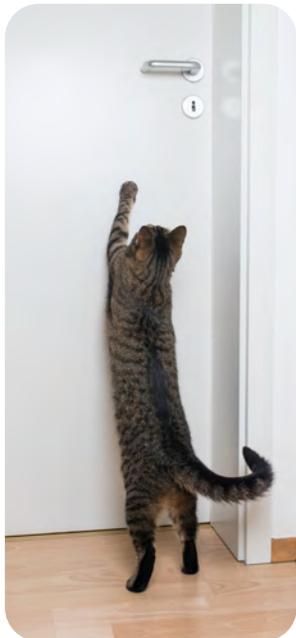
Urine marking (or spraying) is stinky! Getting your cat spayed or neutered is the best way to prevent this. Spaying or neutering will end this issue in more than 95% of females and 90% of males.

GOT A HUMPER?

Engage your cat in another activity like a wand toy, food puzzle or chase game.



TIPS FOR LIVING WITH AN INTACT CAT



No outdoor access! This includes wandering in apartment hallways.

You need to keep **males and females in separate rooms at all times**. If this isn't possible, try asking a friend or neighbour to help out.



Can't stand the smell of your cat spraying all around the house? Look for an **enzymatic cleaner** available at pet stores or on many online sites. Regular cleaning products or even vinegar could make it worse and encourage your cat to spray.

Keep **multiple litter boxes** (number of cats in home + 1) in your home. Clean them daily and use non-scented clumping litter.



BCSPCA

CARING FOR YOUR DOG

FOOD & WATER

FOOD



For most dogs, dry dog food available at pet food stores will provide a well-balanced diet. Puppies should be fed puppy food until about one year old. Some dogs may require a special diet due to allergies or another medical condition. It's always best to talk to a veterinarian if you need help.

How much should you feed?

Follow instructions on the bag and split the daily portion into two meals per day.

Canned food is a good supplement and makes mealtime more delicious for picky eaters. If you use canned food, give a little less dry food.

TREATS

Dog treats are perfect for training and rewarding good behaviours. It's okay to feed treats but too many can cause health concerns. Try portioning out treats each day to help manage overfeeding.

HUMAN FOOD WARNING!!!

Some human foods are **dangerous to dogs**. This includes alcohol, chocolate, grapes/raisins, onions and garlic, seeds/pits from fruit, avocados, gum, candy or peanut butter with xylitol, and salty, greasy snacks.



WATCH THEIR WEIGHT!



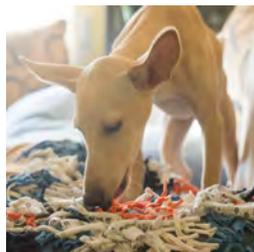
Extra weight sometimes seems cute but it can be bad for your dog's health. Place your thumbs on the backbone of your dog and spread your fingers down their ribs: you should feel a layer of fat but easily feel their rib bones. If your dog is getting a little heavy, cut down on the food or if your dog is able, encourage them to be more active.



Keep your dog in the green zone!

MIX IT UP! EXERCISE OPTIONS

Walks are a great form of exercise and you can also add in activities like swimming, playing fetch or off-leash park time. Does your dog love to sniff? Try sniff walks where their nose leads the way! Puzzle feeders, snuffle mats or toys like Kongs will help increase activity levels as well.



TOO SKINNY?

Dogs can be too skinny too. You should not be able to see ribs through the skin or bones at the base of the tail sticking out. Hip bones and spine should not be seen or easy to feel beneath the skin.

WATER

Your dog should always have access to clean water. Change water daily and wash the bowl regularly.

CARING FOR YOUR DOG HOME ENVIRONMENT

Your dog needs a comfortable environment that is well ventilated and includes protection from heat, cold and damp.

Your home should include:

- A variety of places to rest (e.g., bare floor, beds, blankets, tile)
- The freedom to move about



KENNELS



This crate is the **RIGHT** size for your dog



This crate is the **WRONG** size for your dog



This crate is the **RIGHT** size for your dog



This crate is the **WRONG** size for your dog

When dogs are used to it, kennels can provide a safe and comforting place for your dog to hang out.

Make sure your dog can sit upright, stand and turn in the kennel. Wire kennels must have a flat tray to cover the bottom. Always offer soft bedding inside so that your dog has a choice.

You can choose to use a kennel during bedtime and when you leave your home. Kennels are also great for travel from place to place and the safest way to transport your dog in a car.

TETHERING

Never leave your dog tied up in your home alone. Your dog may get tangled up or hang themselves. Never tether a dog with a choke or prong collar on or with a rope or chord that is tied directly around your dog's neck.

DRUGS & PARAPHERNALIA

Puppies are curious, and some dogs love to chew. Watch your pet closely to see if they may have chewed, inhaled or swallowed drugs, used foils or cookers. **Keep paraphernalia out of reach of pets.**

Do not give your dog any human meds (like Tylenol, Advil, Aspirin, etc.) unless you have talked to a vet.

TIPS TO KEEP YOUR PET SAFER

- Get a plastic shoe box with a snap-on lid to store your drugs and stuff

Before you use substances

- Try using an x-pen or baby gate to keep your dog in a designated area in your home
- If your dog is crate trained, put your dog inside their crate

Has your dog gotten into drugs? Call a veterinarian or emergency clinic for advice. If you know your dog has gotten into opioids and see signs of poisoning, **naloxone can be given to dogs** and should be administered right away. If it's a stimulant or cannabis, you can't reverse this – take your dog to a vet immediately.



BCSPCA

CARING FOR YOUR DOG HEALTH



SPAY/NEUTER

BENEFITS OF SPAY/NEUTER

- Generally, neutering can decrease aggressive behaviours
- Neutered dogs are calmer and less likely to bite, attack or get into dog fights
- Spaying ends the heat cycle in females, so you don't have to worry about diapers and pads
- Eliminates the risk of many cancers
- Studies show that fixed pets, on average, live longer

PREVENT UNWANTED LITTERS

Puppies can have puppies! Start keeping unfixed males and females apart at four months old. **GET YOUR PUP FIXED BY SIX MONTHS OLD.**

It's irresponsible to breed your dog. Without proper support from a veterinarian throughout the pregnancy, you put your dog's health at risk. When your dog gives birth, you need to be able to access an emergency clinic in case anything goes wrong. When the pups are born, they need proper monitoring and should see a vet by six weeks of age or sooner if any issues arise.

VETERINARY CARE



It's recommended that your dog should have a check-up once a year with a veterinarian. If not, watch out for lumps and bumps, changes to your dog's eating and washroom habits, and other changes in their behaviour. If you notice something different, get in touch with a veterinarian.

VACCINES

Vaccines protect your dog from getting diseases that are contagious and potentially fatal. Vaccinating your dog offers protection for your dog and dogs in the community. When you get your dog or when a puppy turns six weeks old, visit your veterinarian for a check-up and vaccine plan.

Puppies should start their vaccines at six to eight weeks of age and will need a series of vaccines before they reach four months old. Schedules for adult dogs may vary depending on lifestyle and vaccines needed.



COMMON DOG VACCINES

- Rabies
- DAPP combo (distemper, adenovirus, parvovirus and parainfluenza)
- Bordetella (kennel cough)
- Leptospirosis

DEWORMING

Dogs can get all sorts of different intestinal worms and it can be very uncomfortable for your dog. Some may even be transferred to humans! Talk to your veterinarian if you think your dog has worms.

CARING FOR YOUR DOG HEALTH

PARASITES

FLEAS

Fleas are tiny (1 to 3 mm) blood-sucking insects. They multiply quickly and can make your pet sick if left untreated. Fleas will bite people too!

How do I know if my dog has fleas?

Your dog will be itchy, and you might notice them scratch more than usual. Check your pet's belly where you might see fleas crawling. Gently pull apart the fur to expose the skin and look for what looks like pepper or coffee grinds – this is actually bits of dried blood!

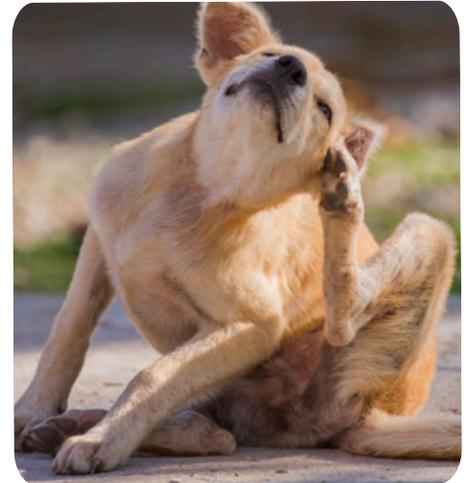
How do you treat fleas?

Flea collars and powders may help but are not very effective. A monthly pill or topical liquids applied to the skin prescribed by your veterinarian can help get rid of fleas.



WARNING: Flea medication

You can find flea treatments for dogs at pet stores that contain **permethrin**, which is okay for dogs but **poisonous to cats!** Do not share treatments with other pets.



WORMS (including tapeworms, whipworms and roundworms)

Worms in your dog can be transferred to people! **GROSS.** Wash your hands after picking up poop, hanging out outside and before you eat. It's important to look out for signs of worms in your dog.

What are signs of worms? You might see them in the poop or vomit. In some cases, you might see them crawling out of your dog's bum, or you might see eggs (clear, rice-shaped) in their bedding. But don't worry – there is a simple fix. Medication for worms can be obtained from your veterinarian.

TICKS

Ticks hang out on the ends of tall grass and attach themselves to a host. They bury their heads inside the skin to suck blood. They attach so firmly that the removal of a tick may require a two-step approach that removes the body and then the head from your dog.

Ticks are not as common in the city, but if you take your dog out for hikes in different areas or visit different parts of B.C., you will want to consider some preventative treatment for ticks. A veterinarian can help you with this.



EAR MITES & EAR INFECTIONS

Ear mites are teeny-tiny creatures that live inside your pet's ears. They are common and contagious. If one pet has ear mites, it's likely that they all do.

How do I detect if my dog has ear mites?

Your dog may rub their ears on the ground and shake their heads. You may even see a waxy or crusty buildup in your dog's ear. This could be ear mites or a bacterial or yeast infection.

Ear mites and infections can be diagnosed and treated with medication prescribed by a veterinarian.



CARING FOR YOUR DOG HEALTH

GROOMING

FUR

Your dog's fur should look clean and free from debris. Comb/brush your dog's fur. Mats (tangles) can build up and be very painful for your dog.



NAILS

Nails should be trimmed regularly (about once a month). When a dog stands, their nails should just touch or not touch the ground.

IDENTIFICATION (ID)

If your dog should ever get lost, make sure they have proper ID in the form of a collar and tags paired with a microchip or tattoo, which can be done by a veterinarian.



MYTH BUSTING

Does a microchip act like a tracker or global positioning device (GPS)?

ANSWER: NO! Microchips use radio frequency and are only activated when scanned by a special device. They only provide information stored in the microchip – your contact information to help get your dog back to you as soon as possible!



COLLARS & HARNESSSES



Flat collars are great everyday collars. Find the right size and width that works for your dog.

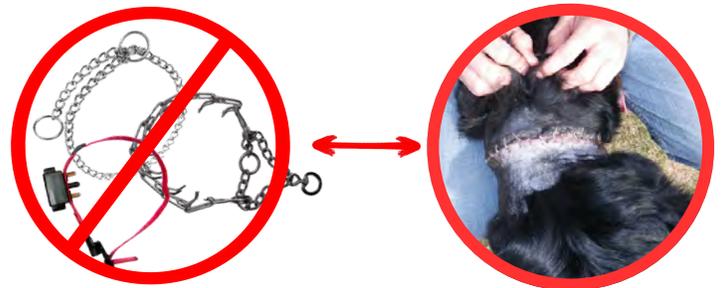


Martingale collars stay loose around your dog's neck and tighten (but don't choke) when your dog pulls or tries to slip out of the collar.



Harnesses may take pressure off your dog's neck if they tend to pull. They come in a variety of designs that go over the head, your dog can step into, front clips, back clips and more. Choose something that your dog is comfortable with.

The BC SPCA does not support the use of collars and devices that cause anxiety, fear, distress, pain and/or injury.



Prong collars have metal spikes that dig into a dog's neck when they pull. They cause pain and that's only why your dog stops pulling.

Choke collars can cause pain and even serious injuries to your dog's neck, voice box and back.

Shock collars deliver an electric shock via a remote controlled by the owner.

CARING FOR YOUR DOG

EXERCISE & PLAY

EXERCISE

At minimum, your dog should get out three times a day for exercise and bathroom breaks. A younger, more energetic dog may require more trips out or longer periods of exercise. Types of exercise include walks, sniffing and supervised off-leash time.

Puppies in training need several potty trips a day.

PLAY

TOYS, TOYS, TOYS

Stuffies with squeakers, tug toys, puzzle feeders, balls, treat dispensers and more. With all the options, which ones should you choose? Select toys based on your dog's size, age and chewing level.

For chew toys and treats, remember the **Knee Knock Rule**: if you wouldn't knock yourself in the knee with it, don't give it to your dog! Broken teeth are extremely painful and costly to treat.

HAVE FUN AND STAY SAFE!

Keep toys fun by **always monitoring your dog** during play and chew time.

Some dangers include:

- Eating chewed-off pieces of toys
- Eating the squeaker inside

AVOID

- Rawhide and other edible chews – can be a choking hazard
- Raw or cooked bones – they can break teeth or splinter
- Toys that are too small for your dog
- Tennis balls – the fuzz can wear down your dog's teeth (go with a good rubber ball instead)



GAMES

Hide treats around your home and encourage your dog to sniff them out. There are also lots of puzzle toys available to dogs.

You can turn a **towel into a treat mat**. Lay out a towel, sprinkle kibble or treats onto it and then either roll the towel up or spiral it and let your dog sniff and hunt for the kibble! *This may not work for dogs who start to chew, shred or eat the towel!*

Play **one-on-one games** like tug-of-war with your dog. Just don't forget to let your dog win sometimes or they will become frustrated with the game. **Teach your dog tricks.**

Fetch can be a great form of exercise and fun for you and your dog.

SOCIALIZATION

Set up play dates for your dog to play with a dog friend. If your dog is good with other dogs (and is spayed/neutered), take them to the dog park for play with other dogs.



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Put toys away and rotate them so your dog thinks they have new toys all the time!



CARING FOR YOUR GERBIL

FOOD & WATER

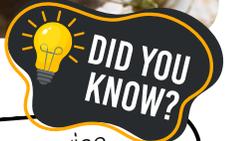
FOOD

Chow down

Being omnivores, gerbils eat both plant and animal foods. Feed yours a staple diet of pelleted food made for gerbils. Pellets are a complete, balanced diet and should be available to them all the time.



Provide a small amount of vegetables, greens, fruits and seeds every day, too. Gerbils crave variety! Be sure to remove any uneaten fresh food the next day so it doesn't spoil and make them sick.



Gerbils have continuously growing front teeth. Because of this, they must gnaw on abrasive foods and materials to help them wear their teeth down. It's really important to follow a proper diet and give them things to chew!

Snack time

Gerbils love treats! Foods such as unsweetened whole grain cereals, nuts and mealworms make great snacks. Just don't feed too many or you'll end up with overweight gerbils.

WHAT ABOUT MIXES?

Some diets sold for gerbils contain a mix of foods like seeds, dried fruits and corn. The problem with these diets is that gerbils can pick and choose what they like, which means they won't get all the nutrients they need, even if the diet is advertised as "complete."



WATER

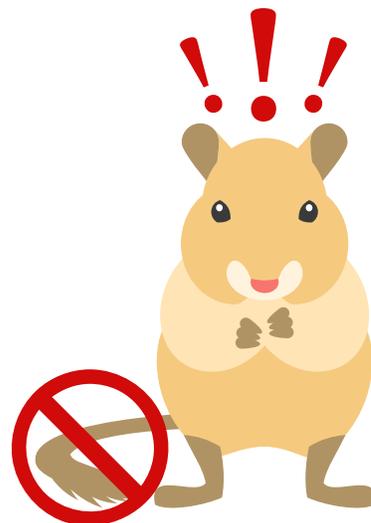
Gerbils need water available to them all the time. Fill your gerbils' sipper bottle with clean, fresh water every day. Once a week, clean the bottle using soap and water and rinse well before refilling.

Avoid water dishes. Gerbils tend to bury them as they dig, creating a soggy mess.

HANDLING

Handle with care

You can pick up your gerbils by putting cupped hands near them and letting them crawl into your hands. Be careful not to squeeze. Not all gerbils enjoy being held and they may try to leap from your hands.



Hands off tails!

Gerbils should never be picked up by their tail because part of it could be torn off. It won't grow back.

CARING FOR YOUR GERBIL HOME ENVIRONMENT



Gerbils are active animals requiring a large habitat. The more space, the better!

Your gerbils' living space should include:

- Areas for your gerbils to hide
- Opportunities to dig, chew and explore

HABITAT OPTIONS

Gerbils are burrowers so a deep enclosure with a solid bottom is best. A 40 gallon aquarium with a wire mesh lid works well for a pair of gerbils. Aquariums are secure and can easily be filled with burrowing material.

For bedding, use wood shavings such as aspen, shredded paper or recycled paper bedding (or a mix of all three!). Don't use cedar or pine shavings because they can cause health problems.

Provide a deep layer of bedding to allow your gerbils to burrow. Clean the entire cage every two weeks. Gerbils aren't known for being smelly. As desert animals, they produce dry feces and very little urine.

Adding small houses, hanging toys, ramps, tunnels, tubes and a solid (not wire) exercise wheel provides stimulation and places to hide and sleep. Swap items in and out to keep your gerbils' home interesting. Scatter or hang nesting material like toilet paper for your gerbils to gather.

WHERE'S THE BEST PLACE TO PUT YOUR GERBILS' HOME?

Keep the cage in an area protected from cold drafts and direct sunlight, as well as bright lights and loud noises.



Other habitat options include a long glass IKEA® cabinet turned on its side (though you'll need to make your own secure, well-ventilated lid for this).



Aquariums can be quite expensive. The good news is you don't need a brand new one to create a comfortable, stimulating home for your gerbils. A used aquarium will do – and costs a lot less. It doesn't need to hold water so leaks don't matter! You can look through online ads or check out garage sales for used tanks.

CARING FOR YOUR GERBIL

EXERCISE & PLAY

TOYS & GAMES

Gerbils require daily exercise and will happily explore a playpen made just for them. A wading pool or a bathtub (drain closed!) lined with a towel works well. Fill with safe objects to climb on, over and through to keep your gerbils busy and interested. Paper bags, cereal boxes, paper cups, toilet paper rolls and untreated wood are good choices. Always supervise playtime.



Keep the cardboard coming!

Gerbils love to chew, and cardboard is a particular favourite. Drink holders, egg cartons, toilet paper rolls and tissue boxes all make great gerbil toys. Plus, they're easy to find and free. Give your gerbils cardboard on a daily basis.

BUDDY UP!

Gerbils shouldn't be kept alone. Two or more can live together provided they're the same sex and have a large enough living space. To help prevent squabbles, gerbils kept in pairs should come from the same litter or be introduced to each other when they're very young.



Which wheel?

When choosing a wheel, solid surfaces (like all-plastic wheels) are safer and more comfortable than wire ones, which can hurt gerbil feet. As for size, when gerbils run, their back shouldn't be arched into a U-shape – that means the wheel is too small. Running like that can hurt their back.



FIRST ADOPTION OPTION

Interested in adding gerbils to your family? [Make adoption your first option!](#) BC SPCA Community Animal Centres often have gerbils available for adoption.

Benefits of adoption from the BC SPCA:

- In-Centre physical exam performed by staff
- Medical treatment by a veterinarian, if required, while in care



BCSPCA

CARING FOR YOUR GERBIL HEALTH

A HEALTHY GERBIL

- ✓ Eyes are clean and bright
- ✓ Ears are clean with no discharge or unpleasant odour
- ✓ Coat is smooth and shiny
- ✓ Nose is clean with no discharge or redness
- ✓ Not too fat or too thin



MEDICAL CARE



Gerbils are a prey species. This means they tend to hide their symptoms when they're not feeling well. Watch out for changes to your gerbils' eating habits and other changes in their behaviour and routines. If you notice something different, contact a veterinarian. Gerbils usually live for three to four years.

DENTAL CARE



To help wear down their ever-growing front teeth, provide your gerbils with chewing items such as cardboard, Timothy hay, wooden toys, and willow and apple sticks. Make sure the branches come from trees that haven't been treated with any chemicals.



GROOMING

Gerbils are great groomers. They spend lots of time each day carefully cleaning themselves and each other all over. Should you notice your gerbils' coats looking a little greasy, provide them with a dust bath – a small fish bowl or glass jar tilted on its side with a shallow layer (two to three tablespoons) of animal-safe sand like chinchilla sand. Leave the bath in their cage for about half an hour before taking it out.



TOO MANY GERBILS!

Gerbils in shelters and rescues across B.C. are in need of new homes. *Try to make adoption your first option if you love gerbils!*

PREVENT UNWANTED LITTERS

Never keep male and female gerbils together, even for a short period. Gerbils multiply at an amazing rate. Females can have up to 12 litters in just one year, with anywhere from one to eight young per litter. Baby gerbils need to be separated by sex at eight weeks of age before they begin breeding.



CARING FOR YOUR GUINEA PIG

FOOD & WATER

FOOD

Chow down

Being herbivores, guinea pigs only eat plants. Feed yours a staple diet of pelleted food. Pellets are a complete, balanced diet and should be available to them all the time. Be sure to feed pellets specific to guinea pigs because they have added vitamin C, which is important for guinea pig health.



Provide a handful of greens and vegetables every day, too.

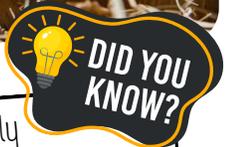
Hey, don't forget hay!

Let your guinea pigs munch away on Timothy hay to their heart's content! Hay helps with digestion. Avoid alfalfa, though – it's too rich for most guinea pigs.



WHAT ABOUT MIXES?

Some diets sold for guinea pigs contain a mix of foods like seeds, dried fruits and corn. The problem with these diets is that guinea pigs can pick and choose what they like, which means they won't get all the nutrients they need, even if the diet is advertised as "complete." Plus, some of the ingredients are simply unsuitable for guinea pigs.



Guinea pigs have continuously growing teeth. Because of this, they must gnaw on abrasive foods and materials to help them wear their teeth down. It's really important to follow a proper diet and give them things to chew!

RECOMMENDED GREENS

Introduce new food gradually to avoid upsetting your guinea pigs' digestive system.

	<i>Parsley</i>		<i>Red or green leaf lettuce</i>		<i>Watercress</i>
	<i>Spinach</i>		<i>Romaine lettuce</i>		<i>Cilantro</i>
	<i>Arugula</i>		<i>Turnip greens</i>		<i>Radicchio</i>
	<i>Carrot tops</i>		<i>Dandelion greens</i>		<i>Bok choy</i>
	<i>Kale</i>		<i>Mint</i>		<i>Basil</i>

!!! DON'T FEED iceberg lettuce, onions, rhubarb, leeks, garlic, potatoes, corn or corn husks, tomato leaves or human food.



WATER

Guinea pigs need water available to them all the time. Fill your guinea pigs' sipper bottle or heavy ceramic dish with clean, fresh water every day. Use soap and water to clean them out – once a week for bottles and daily for dishes. Rinse well before refilling.

CARING FOR YOUR GUINEA PIG HOME ENVIRONMENT



Guinea pigs are active animals requiring a large habitat. The more space, the better!

Your guinea pigs' living space should include:

- A variety of places to rest and hang out
- Areas for your guinea pigs to hide
- Opportunities to chew and explore

HABITAT OPTIONS

Guinea pigs need a living area that is at least 70 cm by 70 cm per guinea pig, with walls about 30 cm high. They don't climb or jump very well, so the enclosure can be open on top – unless you also happen to have a cat or a dog at home. The cage can be made out of metal or plastic. The bottom should be flat and solid, not mesh or wire, which can hurt their feet.

Generally, cages available at pet stores aren't big enough, but you can get creative with exercise pens and wire storage cubes. Online stores like Amazon sell lots of do-it-yourself small animal playpens that are more affordable than a pet store cage.

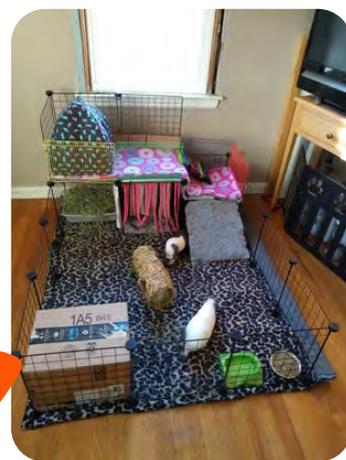
Cover the cage floor with aspen wood shavings, recycled paper bedding or a thick, clean blanket. Don't use cedar or pine shavings because they can cause health problems. Scoop soiled shavings daily. Clean the entire cage at least once a week. A clean, dry cage will help keep your guinea pigs healthy.

Within the cage, add small wooden or plastic houses, as well as cardboard or plastic tubes large enough for your guinea pigs to run through. These will help prevent boredom and make them feel secure.

For a litter box, a low-sided cat or small animal litter pan works well, as long as your guinea pigs can fit completely inside. Fill the bottom with a few inches of guinea pig-safe litter such as paper- or wood-based pellets, and make sure there's a ton of Timothy hay to munch on while they're in their litter box.

WHERE'S THE BEST PLACE TO PUT YOUR GUINEA PIGS' HOME?

Keep the cage in an area protected from cold drafts and direct sunlight, but near to where people hang out.



Visit sPCA.bc.ca/habitats for a step-by-step guide to building a large, inexpensive habitat from a sheet of corrugated plastic and some wire storage cubes.

CARING FOR YOUR GUINEA PIG

EXERCISE & PLAY

TOYS & GAMES

Guinea pigs require exercise and will happily romp around a room that has been cleared of hazards such as electrical cords, cats or dogs, and poisonous plants. They love to run along walls and hide under furniture. You should let your guinea pigs have time out of their habitat every day in a safe, enclosed area. Always supervise playtime.

Play with your food!

Combine your guinea pigs' love of food with playtime. They'll quickly learn to roll a treat-dispensing ball around and gobble up the pellets that fall out. Or you can sprinkle some pellets in a "snuffle mat" made from fleece or dried Timothy hay for them to find. This keeps their minds and bodies active.



Staying close to the floor and having your guinea pigs on your lap is a safe handling option.

HANDLING

Handle with care

Many guinea pigs don't mind being held, but they must be handled gently and carefully. Always pick up your guinea pigs with two hands: one hand under their hind end and the other around their chest.



BUDDY UP!

Guinea pigs love company. Two can live together as long as they are the same sex and have a large enough living space.



FIRST ADOPTION OPTION

Interested in adding guinea pigs to your family? *Make adoption your first option!* BC SPCA Community Animal Centres often have guinea pigs available for adoption.

Benefits of adoption from the BC SPCA:

- In-Centre physical exam performed by staff
- Medical treatment by a veterinarian, if required, while in care



BCSPCA

CARING FOR YOUR GUINEA PIG HEALTH

A HEALTHY GUINEA PIG

- ✓ Eyes are clean and bright
- ✓ Ears are clean with no discharge or unpleasant odour
- ✓ Coat is smooth and shiny with no bald patches
- ✓ Nose is clean with no discharge
- ✓ Not too fat or too thin



MEDICAL CARE



Guinea pigs are a prey species. This means they tend to hide their symptoms when they're not feeling well. Watch out for changes to your guinea pigs' eating habits and other changes in their behaviour and routines. If you notice something different, contact a veterinarian. Guinea pigs usually live for five to six years.

DENTAL CARE



To help wear down their ever-growing teeth, provide your guinea pigs with chewing items such as cardboard, Timothy hay, wooden toys, and willow and apple sticks. Make sure the branches come from trees that haven't been treated with any chemicals.



GROOMING

Guinea pigs need to have their nails trimmed every four to six weeks. Just be careful: if you cut their nails too short, they can bleed and be painful.

Long-haired guinea pigs need to have their hair brushed regularly. And though guinea pigs groom themselves, you can give your guinea pigs a bath once in a while if they're smelly or greasy. Use warm water and a mild pet shampoo. Make sure you rinse out all of the shampoo. Dry him off with a towel.



TOO MANY GUINEA PIGS!

Guinea pigs in shelters and rescues across B.C. are in need of new homes. *Try to make adoption your first option if you love guinea pigs!*



PREVENT UNWANTED LITTERS

Never keep males and females together, even for a short period (unless they are neutered or spayed). Female guinea pigs can have up to five litters in just one year, with anywhere from one to eight young per litter. Baby guinea pigs need to be separated by sex at four weeks of age before they begin breeding.

CARING FOR YOUR HAMSTER

FOOD & WATER

FOOD

Chow down

Being omnivores, hamsters eat both plant and animal foods. Feed yours a staple diet of pelleted food made for hamsters. Pellets are a complete, balanced diet and should be available to them all the time.



Provide a small amount of vegetables, greens, fruits and seeds every day, too. Hamsters crave variety! Be sure to remove any uneaten fresh food the next day so it doesn't spoil and make them sick. Hamsters hoard their food, so be sure to look for hidden stashes too.



Snack time

Hamsters love treats! Foods such as scrambled egg, mealworms and nuts make great snacks. Just don't feed too many or you'll end up with an overweight hamster.

WHAT ABOUT MIXES?

Some diets sold for hamsters contain a mix of foods like seeds, dried fruits and corn. The problem with these diets is that hamsters can pick and choose what they like, which means they won't get all the nutrients they need, even if the diet is advertised as "complete."



Hamsters have continuously growing front teeth. Because of this, they must gnaw on abrasive foods and materials to help them wear their teeth down. It's really important to follow a proper diet and give them things to chew!



WATER

Hamsters need water available to them all the time. Fill your hamster's sipper bottle with clean, fresh water every day. Once a week, clean the bottle using soap and water and rinse well before refilling.

Avoid water dishes. Hamsters tend to bury them as they dig, creating a soggy mess.

HANDLING

Handle with care

You can pick up your hamster by putting cupped hands near them and letting them crawl into your hands. Be careful not to squeeze. Not all hamsters enjoy being held and they may try to leap from your hands.



Hamsters are nocturnal. They're active at night. Disturbing your hamster during the day while they're asleep may cause them to get upset and bite.

CARING FOR YOUR HAMSTER

HOME ENVIRONMENT



Hamsters are active animals requiring a large habitat. The more space, the better!

Your hamster's living space should include:

- Areas for your hamster to hide
- Opportunities to dig, chew and explore

HABITAT OPTIONS

Hamsters are burrowers so a deep enclosure with a solid bottom is best. A 40 gallon aquarium with a wire mesh lid works well for a single Syrian or a pair of dwarf hamsters. Aquariums are secure and can easily be filled with burrowing material.

For bedding, use wood shavings such as aspen, shredded paper or recycled paper bedding (or a mix of all three!). Don't use cedar or pine shavings because they can cause health problems.

Provide a deep layer of bedding to allow your hamster to burrow. Clean toilet areas every other day and the entire cage once a week.

Adding small houses, hanging toys, ramps, tunnels, tubes and a solid (not wire) exercise wheel provides stimulation and places to hide and sleep. Swap items in and out to keep your hamster's home interesting. Scatter or hang nesting material like toilet paper for your hamster to gather.

WHERE'S THE BEST PLACE TO PUT YOUR HAMSTER'S HOME?

Keep the cage in an area protected from cold drafts and direct sunlight, as well as bright lights and loud noises.



Other habitat options include a long glass IKEA® cabinet turned on its side (though you'll need to make your own secure, well-ventilated lid for this).



Aquariums can be quite expensive. The good news is you don't need a brand new one to create a comfortable, stimulating home for your hamster. A used aquarium will do – and costs a lot less. It doesn't need to hold water so leaks don't matter! You can look through online ads or check out garage sales for used tanks.

CARING FOR YOUR HAMSTER

EXERCISE & PLAY

TOYS & GAMES

Hamsters require daily exercise and will happily explore a playpen made just for them. A wading pool or a bathtub (drain closed!) lined with a towel works well. Fill with safe objects to climb on, over and through to keep your hamster busy and interested. Paper bags, cereal boxes, paper cups, toilet paper rolls and untreated wood are good choices. Always supervise playtime.



Which wheel?

When choosing a wheel, solid surfaces (like all-plastic wheels) are safer and more comfortable than wire ones, which can hurt hamster feet. As for size, when hamsters run, their back shouldn't be arched into a U-shape – that means the wheel is too small. Running like that can hurt their back.

SINGLE OR SOCIAL?

Syrian hamsters like living on their own and should be housed by themselves. Otherwise they will fight.

Dwarf hamsters are more social. Two or more can live together provided they're the same sex and have a large habitat. To help prevent squabbles, dwarf hamsters kept in pairs should come from the same litter or be introduced to each other when they're very young. Even then, they may still end up fighting and have to be permanently separated.



WHAT ABOUT HAMSTER BALLS?

While they may look like fun, hamster balls are actually not very safe for hamsters. They can easily be kicked, fall down stairs or forgotten about.



FIRST ADOPTION OPTION

Interested in adding a hamster to your family? [Make adoption your first option!](#) BC SPCA Community Animal Centres often have hamsters available for adoption.

Benefits of adoption from the BC SPCA:

- In-Centre physical exam performed by staff
- Medical treatment by a veterinarian, if required, while in care



BCSPCA

CARING FOR YOUR HAMSTER HEALTH

A HEALTHY HAMSTER

- ✓ Eyes are clean and bright
- ✓ Ears are clean with no discharge or unpleasant odour
- ✓ Coat is smooth and shiny
- ✓ Nose is clean with no discharge or redness
- ✓ Not too fat or too thin



MEDICAL CARE



Hamsters are a prey species. This means they tend to hide their symptoms when they're not feeling well. Watch out for changes to your hamster's eating habits and other changes in their behaviour and routines. If you notice something different, contact a veterinarian. Hamsters usually live for about two years.

DENTAL CARE



To help wear down their ever-growing front teeth, provide your hamster with chewing items such as cardboard, Timothy hay, wooden toys, and willow and apple sticks. Make sure the branches come from trees that haven't been treated with any chemicals.



TOILET TRAINING

Most hamsters will use one corner or area as a toilet area. You can buy a hamster-sized litter box at a pet supply store, or use an appropriately sized glass jar turned on its side. Place some soiled bedding in the litter box to encourage your hamster to use it.



TOO MANY HAMSTERS!

Hamsters in shelters and rescues across B.C. are in need of new homes. *Try to make adoption your first option if you love hamsters!*

PREVENT UNWANTED LITTERS

Never keep male and female hamsters together, even for a short period. Hamsters multiply at an amazing rate. Females can have up to 10 litters in just one year, with anywhere from four to 12 young per litter. Baby hamsters need to be separated by sex at five weeks of age before they begin breeding.



CARING FOR YOUR MOUSE

FOOD & WATER

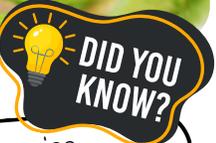
FOOD

Chow down

Being omnivores, mice eat both plant and animal foods. Feed yours a staple diet of pelleted food made for mice. Pellets are a complete, balanced diet and should be available to them all the time.



Provide a small amount of vegetables, greens, fruits and seeds every day, too. Mice crave variety! Be sure to remove any uneaten fresh food the next day so it doesn't spoil and make them sick.



Mice have continuously growing front teeth. Because of this, they must gnaw on abrasive foods and materials to help them wear their teeth down. It's really important to follow a proper diet and give them things to chew!

Snack time

Mice love treats! Foods such as unsweetened whole grain cereals, nuts and scrambled egg make great snacks. Just don't feed too many or you'll end up with overweight mice.

WHAT ABOUT MIXES?

Some diets sold for mice contain a mix of foods like seeds, dried fruits and corn. The problem with these diets is that mice can pick and choose what they like, which means they won't get all the nutrients they need, even if the diet is advertised as "complete."



WATER

Mice need water available to them all the time. Fill your mice's sipper bottle with clean, fresh water every day. Once a week, clean the bottle using soap and water and rinse well before refilling.

Avoid water dishes. Mice tend to bury them as they dig, creating a soggy mess.

HANDLING

Handle with care

You can pick up your mice by putting cupped hands near them and letting them crawl into your hands. Be careful not to squeeze. Not all mice enjoy being held and they may try to leap from your hands.



Hands off tails!

Mice should never be picked up by their tail. It's uncomfortable and stressful for them.



CARING FOR YOUR MOUSE

HOME ENVIRONMENT



Mice are active animals requiring a large habitat. The more space, the better!

Your mice's living space should include:

- Areas for your mice to hide
- Opportunities to dig, chew and explore

HABITAT OPTIONS

Mice are burrowers so a deep enclosure with a solid bottom is best. A 40 gallon aquarium with a wire mesh lid works well for a pair of mice. Aquariums are secure and can easily be filled with burrowing material.

For bedding, use wood shavings such as aspen, shredded paper or recycled paper bedding (or a mix of all three!). Don't use cedar or pine shavings because they can cause health problems.

Provide a deep layer of bedding to allow your mice to burrow. Clean the cage several times a week to keep your mice healthy. Ammonia from urine can irritate their lungs and lead to illness.

Adding small houses, ropes, hanging toys, ramps, hammocks, ladders, tunnels, tubes and a solid (not wire) exercise wheel provides stimulation and places to hide and sleep. Swap items in and out to keep your mice's home interesting. Scatter or hang nesting material like toilet paper for your mice to gather. Mice love to build nests!

WHERE'S THE BEST PLACE TO PUT YOUR MICE'S HOME?

Keep the cage in an area protected from cold drafts and direct sunlight, as well as bright lights and loud noises.



Other habitat options include a long glass IKEA® cabinet turned on its side (though you'll need to make your own secure, well-ventilated lid for this).



Aquariums can be quite expensive. The good news is you don't need a brand new one to create a comfortable, stimulating home for your mice. A used aquarium will do – and costs a lot less. It doesn't need to hold water so leaks don't matter! You can look through online ads or check out garage sales for used tanks.

CARING FOR YOUR MOUSE

EXERCISE & PLAY

TOYS & GAMES

Mice require daily exercise and will happily explore a playpen made just for them. A wading pool or a bathtub (drain closed!) lined with a towel works well. Fill with safe objects to climb on, over and through to keep your mice busy and interested. Paper bags, cereal boxes, paper cups, toilet paper rolls and untreated wood are good choices. Always supervise playtime.



Which wheel?

When choosing a wheel, solid surfaces (like all-plastic wheels) are safer and more comfortable than wire ones, which can hurt mouse feet. As for size, when mice run, their back shouldn't be arched into a U-shape – that means the wheel is too small. Running like that can hurt their back.

SINGLE OR SOCIAL?

Female mice shouldn't be kept alone. Two or more can live together provided they're the same sex and have a large enough living space. To help prevent squabbles, female mice kept in pairs should come from the same litter or be introduced to each other when they're very young.

Male mice are prone to fighting and should be housed by themselves.



Happy to hide!

Being a prey species, mice tend to avoid open areas, so be sure to add lots of hiding places in their living space and exercise area.



FIRST ADOPTION OPTION

Interested in adding mice to your family? [Make adoption your first option!](#) BC SPCA Community Animal Centres often have mice available for adoption.

Benefits of adoption from the BC SPCA:

- In-Centre physical exam performed by staff
- Medical treatment by a veterinarian, if required, while in care



BCSPCA

CARING FOR YOUR MOUSE HEALTH

A HEALTHY MOUSE

- ✓ Eyes are clean and bright
- ✓ Ears are clean with no discharge or unpleasant odour
- ✓ Coat is smooth and shiny
- ✓ Nose is clean with no discharge or redness
- ✓ Not too fat or too thin



MEDICAL CARE



Mice are a prey species. This means they tend to hide their symptoms when they're not feeling well. Watch out for changes to your mice's eating habits and other changes in their behaviour and routines. If you notice something different, contact a veterinarian. Mice usually live for one to three years.

DENTAL CARE



To help wear down their ever-growing front teeth, provide your mice with chewing items such as cardboard, Timothy hay, wooden toys, and willow and apple sticks. Make sure the branches come from trees that haven't been treated with any chemicals.



WHAT'S THAT SMELL?

Compared to female mice, male mice have a strong, musky odour. The reason? Males scent mark their environment with urine. You can reduce (but not eliminate) the smell by cleaning your mouse's cage regularly. Keep in mind, though, the more you clean their enclosure, the more they will scent mark – making the smell even stronger! Also, cleaning too often can be stressful on mice. The key is to find a balance between a little odour and a healthy environment for your mice.



TOO MANY MICE!

Mice in shelters and rescues across B.C. are in need of new homes. *Try to make adoption your first option if you love mice!*

PREVENT UNWANTED LITTERS

Never keep male and female mice together, even for a short period. Mice multiply at an amazing rate. Females can have up to 10 litters in just one year, with anywhere from three to 12 young per litter. Baby mice need to be separated by sex at five weeks of age before they begin breeding.



CARING FOR YOUR RABBIT

FOOD & WATER

FOOD

Hay isn't just for horses

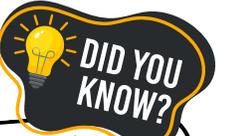
Rabbits are herbivores, meaning they only eat plants. **Grass hay** should be the **staple** of your rabbit's diet. You can feed unlimited amounts of hay such as Timothy hay, orchard grass and oat hay. Avoid alfalfa hay because it's too rich for adult rabbits.



I'll have a salad, please

Your rabbit also needs fresh, leafy green vegetables in their diet every day.

Lastly, you should also supplement their diet with high-fibre, Timothy hay-based pellets from the pet store.



Rabbits have continuously growing teeth. Their front teeth can grow 3 mm a week! Because of this, they must eat abrasive foods like hay to help them wear their teeth down. It's really important to follow a proper diet!

SO HOW MUCH SHOULD I FEED MY RABBIT EACH DAY?

Hay At any given time, your rabbit should have access to a pile of fresh hay at least twice as big as they are.

Fresh vegetables About 1/2 to 1 cup per 2 lbs of body weight. Rotate your vegetable offerings to ensure your rabbit gets a good balance of vitamins and nutrients.

Pellets For rabbits under 5 lbs, about 1/8 cup. For rabbits over 5 lbs, about 1/4 cup.

RECOMMENDED VEGETABLES

Introduce new foods gradually to avoid upsetting your rabbit's digestive system.



Parsley

Spinach

Beet greens



Radish tops

Arugula



Carrot tops

Kale



Red or green leaf lettuce

Romaine lettuce

Spring greens

Turnip greens

Dandelion greens

Mint

Basil



Mustard greens

Watercress

Cilantro

Radicchio

Bok choy

Dill leaves

Yu choy



DO NOT FEED !!!

Iceberg lettuce, onions, rhubarb, leeks, garlic, potatoes, corn and corn husks, and tomato leaves. Do not feed your rabbit human food.



DON'T RABBITS LIKE CARROTS?

They do. But carrots, along with fresh and dried fruits, have a lot of sugar and should only be fed as treats in small portions.



WATER

Your rabbit should always have access to clean water. You can use a water bottle or a low-walled, heavy ceramic bowl to prevent tipping. Change the water daily and wash out the bowl regularly.



CARING FOR YOUR RABBIT HOME ENVIRONMENT



Your rabbit needs a comfortable environment that is well ventilated and includes protection from heat, cold and damp. Rabbits do best when they are kept indoors in an area of the home where people hang out.

Generally, cages available at pet stores are not big enough but you can get creative with exercise pens (x-pens) and wire storage cubes. Online stores like Amazon sell lots of do-it-yourself small animal playpens that are more affordable. **If you do use a cage, it should be at least 4 times the size of your rabbit** when they are entirely stretched out and they need ample time out of the cage.

Their living space should include:

- A variety of places to rest and hang out (e.g., bare floor, beds, towels/blankets, tile)
- Areas for your rabbit to hide
- Litter box (yes, you can litter train a rabbit!)
- Opportunities to dig, chew and explore



HABITAT OPTIONS

Free run in your home



X-pen + wire storage cubes



CAGE VERSUS X-PEN



35" x 17" cage
Costs around \$90
Provides 4.2 ft² floor space



48" x 48" x-pen
Costs around \$80
Provides 16 ft² floor space

RABBIT PROOFING

Rabbits love to chew things. Be sure to "bunny-proof" your home by moving household plants out of reach and blocking off access to electrical cords and other unsafe items. You can buy cord wraps and organizers to keep your cables and wires safe.

CARING FOR YOUR RABBIT

LITTER BOX TRAINING

Yes, you can train your rabbit to use a litter box! This will make clean up much easier on you.

WHAT YOU NEED

- Litter pan (without a lid and at least twice the size of your rabbit)
- Hay
- Litter (pine or recycled paper pellets, torn newspaper, or aspen shavings)

Do not use clay, clumping or crystal-based litters, corn cob, sWheat Scoop brand litter, or pine or cedar shavings – these are not safe for your rabbit to chew or digest.

STEP 1

Fill the litter box with two to three inches of the litter.

STEP 2

Add a bundle of hay at one end of the litter box. Why? Rabbits like to graze while doing their business!

STEP 3

While training, keep your rabbit in a smaller space to help them learn to use one spot consistently. Place the litter box in a corner of your rabbit's housing area. If your rabbit already has a designated pee spot, place the litter box there.

PRO TIPS: Place a bit of the litter or shavings that are already soaked in pee inside the box. If they start to pee in another area, either move the box or set up a second box.

GIVE IT SOME TIME

Be patient and make adjustments as needed. Never punish your rabbit for not using the litter box. When you feel your rabbit is consistently using the litter box, open up their living area again.

CLEANING

Remove soiled hay, top up litter and add new hay daily. Every other day or so, give the litter box a clean with warm water and white vinegar and replace the litter.



My rabbit is litter box trained but sometimes still poops outside of the litter box. Is there anything I can do?

This is normal and may be a territorial thing. It's easy to pick up poops and throw them out or place them in the litter box. If a well-trained rabbit starts peeing outside of the litter box consistently, consult a veterinarian.





CARING FOR YOUR RABBIT

HEALTH PARASITES



FLEAS

Fleas are tiny (1 to 3 mm) blood-sucking insects. They multiply quickly and can make your pet sick if left untreated. Fleas will bite people too!

How do I know if my rabbit has fleas?

Your rabbit will be itchy, and you might notice them scratch more than usual. Check your rabbit's belly and hind end where you might see fleas crawling. Gently pull apart the fur to expose the skin and check for what looks like pepper or coffee grinds – this is actually bits of dried blood!

How do I treat fleas?

Reach out to a veterinarian. There are some topical treatments specific to cats that are safe for your rabbit, but check with a veterinarian before treating your rabbit with anything.

WARNING!

DO NOT USE flea collars on rabbits and never bathe them with a flea dip or shampoo.



EAR MITES & EAR INFECTIONS

Ear mites are teeny-tiny creatures that live inside your pet's ears. They are common and contagious. If one pet has ear mites, it's likely they all do.

How to detect if your rabbit has ear mites?

Your rabbit may rub their ears against things and shake their heads. You may see a brown, waxy or crusty buildup in their ear. This could be ear mites or a bacterial or yeast infection. Ear mites and infections can be diagnosed and treated with medication prescribed by a veterinarian.

FLYSTRIKE

Flystrike is also known as myiasis. This occurs when flies lay their eggs on your rabbit and the eggs hatch into maggots. The maggots will start feeding on your rabbit's flesh.

How can you tell if your rabbit has flystrike?

If your rabbit has any wounds or soiled and wet fur, check the area for signs of eggs and maggots. If you suspect your rabbit has flystrike, contact a veterinarian right away as it's a serious condition and must be treated immediately. This shouldn't happen if your rabbit is young, healthy and their **environment is kept clean and tidy**, so be preventative and:

- Clean the litter box daily and keep your rabbit's environment clean and dry
- If your rabbit is having troubles grooming around their tail and genital areas, help keep them clean and dry
- When in doubt, take your rabbit to a veterinarian



CARING FOR YOUR RABBIT HEALTH



A HEALTHY BUNNY

- Eyes are clean and bright
- Ears are clean with no discharge or unpleasant odour
- Feet are free of injuries or abrasions
- Bottoms are clean and dry, and there is no sign of flystrike
- Not too fat or too thin, with no lumps or bumps

Consult a veterinarian if you observe any issues or notice a difference in your rabbit's normal behaviour.

GROOMING

FUR

Rabbits love being clean and tidy, and like cats, they will groom themselves but they **shed all the time** and **every three months** have a **BIG SHED**.

Brush your rabbit at least once a week and daily during big sheds. You can also gently pluck the loose fur from their body.

Long-haired rabbits will require more work to help fur from matting.

NAILS

Your rabbit's nails need to be trimmed about once a month.



IDENTIFICATION

If your pet were to get lost, identification (ID) will help get your loved one home to you faster. Since rabbits can't wear a collar and ID tag, you can get your rabbit microchipped!



MYTH BUSTING

Does a microchip act like a tracker or global positioning device (GPS)?

ANSWER: NO! Microchips use radio frequency and are only activated when scanned by a special device. They only provide information stored in the microchip – your contact information to help get your rabbit back to you!

TOXIC PLANTS



Rabbits like to nibble on things and love their greens, but be careful: many common plants are harmful to rabbits and can make them sick.

Some common plants and flowers include: daffodils, irises, lilies, nightshade and hyacinth. It's safest to keep your rabbit away from all house plants. If you have concerns, check online for a more detailed list at www.rabbit.org/health/poisonousplants.



CARING FOR YOUR RABBIT HEALTH

TOO MANY RABBITS!



Every year, thousands of rabbits enter shelters and rescues across B.C. *Make adoption your first option if you love rabbits.*

PREVENT UNWANTED LITTERS

They don't say "breed like rabbits" for no reason! Rabbits can multiply quickly and can start breeding when they are still babies! Separate males and females at 10 weeks old. Most vets will spay/neuter rabbits at about six months of age. Need help finding a veterinary clinic that takes rabbit patients? Visit www.rabbit.org/veterinarians.



SPAY/NEUTER

BENEFITS

- Will almost eliminate chances for reproductive cancers (unspayed female rabbits have an 85% chance of developing reproductive cancer at some point in their life)
- Neutered male rabbits are less likely to spray urine
- Easier to litter train
- Less prone to destructive (chewing and digging) and aggressive (biting, lunging, circling and growling) behaviours

GET YOUR RABBIT FIXED BY SIX MONTHS OLD

It's irresponsible to breed your rabbit. A pregnant rabbit needs support from a veterinarian throughout the pregnancy. When your rabbit gives birth, you need to be able to access an emergency clinic if anything goes wrong. After kits are born, mom and kits need proper monitoring.

MEDICAL CARE



It's recommended that your rabbit have a check-up once a year with a veterinarian. If not, watch out for lumps and bumps, dull or oily fur, changes to your rabbit's eating and washroom habits, and other changes in their behaviour and routines. If you notice something different, contact a veterinarian.

RABBIT HEMORRHAGIC DISEASE (RHD)

RHD is a highly infectious and lethal virus that only infects rabbits. Most infected rabbits will die. The virus can persist in the environment for several weeks and may survive both heat and freezing.

How does it spread?

RHD virus spreads easily between rabbits through direct contact with bedding, food and water, feces and bodily fluids. It can also spread through contaminated materials such as food, bedding, water, surfaces, human clothing/hands and shoes.

What are the symptoms?

The virus causes bleeding and attacks the liver and other organs. Most infected rabbits die suddenly, but can show signs of lethargy, lack of co-ordination, behavioural changes or trouble breathing before death. There is often bleeding from the nose at the time of death. Once infected, signs of illness usually occur within 1 to 9 days.

Talk to your veterinarian to protect your rabbit and get a vaccination for RHD.



BCSPCA

CARING FOR YOUR RABBIT

EXERCISE & PLAY

Rabbits are smart and curious, so it's important to keep your rabbit entertained. When you're not at home, you can keep them busy with safe toys and things to chew. Make it interesting by providing opportunities to run, dig, chew, hide, stretch and chill out.

TOYS & GAMES

There are a number of safe toys and chews for rabbits including tunnels, cardboard, baby toys (e.g., plastic keys they can toss and push, stackable cups they can knock down and roll around), straw chew mats and balls, apple or willow tree branches, boxes filled with shredded paper and hay to dig, and more. You can even teach your bunny agility courses!



New toys?
Remember to monitor
your bun to make sure
they stay safe!



SOME BUNNY TO LOVE

Rabbits love company. If you're adopting a rabbit, considering getting a same-sex pair so they can keep each other company when you are not around.



FIRST ADOPTION OPTION

Interested in adding a rabbit to your family? Make adoption your first option! BC SPCA Community Animal Centres and rescues almost always have rabbits available for adoption.

Benefits of adoption from the BC SPCA:

- Spay/neuter surgery included
- In-Centre physical exam performed by staff
- Microchip for identification
- Medical treatment by a veterinarian, if required, while in care



BCSPCA

CARING FOR YOUR RAT

FOOD & WATER

FOOD

Chow down

Being omnivores, rats eat both plant and animal foods. Feed yours a staple diet of pelleted food made for rats. Pellets are a complete, balanced diet and should be available to them all the time.



Provide a small amount of vegetables, greens and fruits every day, too. Rats crave variety! Be sure to remove any uneaten fresh food the next day so it doesn't spoil and make them sick. Rats hoard their food, so be sure to look for hidden stashes too.



Snack time

Rats love treats! Foods such as scrambled egg, plain popcorn, seeds and nuts make great snacks. Just don't feed too many or you'll end up with an overweight rat.

WHAT ABOUT MIXES?

Some diets sold for rats contain a mix of foods like seeds, dried fruits and corn. The problem with these diets is that rats can pick and choose what they like, which means they won't get all the nutrients they need, even if the diet is advertised as "complete."



Rats have continuously growing front teeth. Because of this, they must gnaw on abrasive foods and materials to help them wear their teeth down. It's really important to follow a proper diet and give them things to chew!



WATER

Rats need water available to them all the time. Fill your rats' sipper bottle or heavy ceramic dish with clean, fresh water every day. Use soap and water to clean them out – once a week for bottles and daily for dishes. Rinse well before refilling.

HANDLING

Handle with care

Rats love attention, but they must be handled gently and carefully. Always pick up your rats with two hands: one hand under their hind end and the other around their chest.



Hands off tails!

Rats should never be picked up by their tail. It's uncomfortable and stressful for them.



BCSPCA

CARING FOR YOUR RAT

HOME ENVIRONMENT



Rats are active animals requiring a large habitat. The more space, the better!

Your rats' living space should include:

- A variety of places to rest and hang out
- Areas for your rats to hide
- Opportunities to dig, chew, climb and explore

HABITAT OPTIONS

Rats like to climb so a tall enclosure with multiple levels is best. A cage measuring three feet long by two feet wide by four feet high (pictured here) works well for a pair or small group of rats. Be sure the bar spacing is no larger than half an inch apart for young rats and an inch apart for adult rats to prevent escape.

Habitat bottoms should be solid, not mesh or wire, which can hurt rat feet. Wire shelves should be covered to prevent injuries, too.

Bedding made from recycled paper or fleece fabric works well for rats. Don't use cedar or pine shavings because they can cause health problems. Clean the cage several times a week to keep your rats healthy. Ammonia from urine can irritate their lungs and lead to illness.

WHERE'S THE BEST PLACE TO PUT YOUR RATS' HOME?

Keep the cage in an area protected from cold drafts and direct sunlight, as well as bright lights and loud noises.

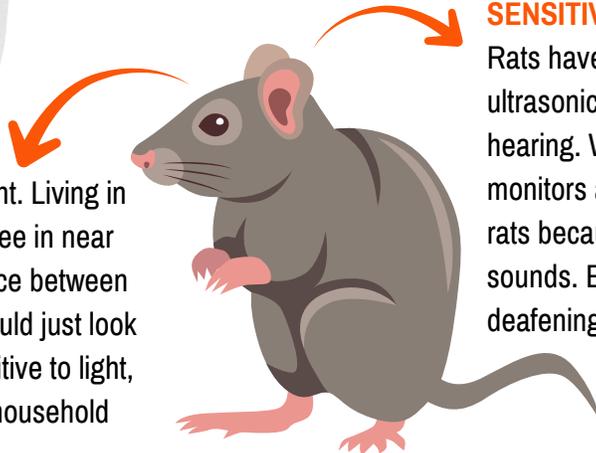
Adding small houses, ropes, hanging toys, plastic cat toys, hammocks, ladders and tubes provides stimulation and places to hide and sleep. Swap items in and out to keep your rats' home interesting. Scatter or hang nesting material like toilet paper for your rats to gather.

SENSITIVE EYES

Rats' eyes are extremely sensitive to light. Living in dark places, they evolved the ability to see in near total darkness. Rats can tell the difference between tiny changes in light intensity when it would just look pitch black to us. Since rats are so sensitive to light, bright light – sunlight and even intense household lights – can cause eye damage.

SENSITIVE EARS

Rats have excellent hearing. They can even hear ultrasonic sounds, a sound range beyond human hearing. While nearly silent to people, computer monitors and fluorescent lighting are very noisy to rats because these devices make ultrasonic sounds. Even crumpling a plastic bag could be deafening to a rat.



CARING FOR YOUR RAT

EXERCISE & PLAY

TOYS & GAMES

Rats require daily exercise and will happily romp around a small room that has been cleared of hazards such as electrical cords, cats or dogs, and poisonous plants. Keep in mind, a rat can squeeze through any opening they can get their head through! Rat-proofing is key. Always supervise playtime.



Bobbing for peas

Fill a shallow dish or bowl with about an inch of water. Pour in some peas. It won't take long for your rats to figure out how to fish for them!

Obstacle course

Create a jungle gym for your rats. Use PVC pipes, cardboard boxes, wooden ladders, the legs cut off an old pair of jeans – pretty much anything you can think of that your rats will want to explore. Then let 'em loose and watch your rats climb all over!



BUDDY UP!

Rats shouldn't be kept alone. Two or more can live together provided they're the same sex and have a large enough living space. To help prevent squabbles, rats kept in pairs should come from the same litter or be introduced to each other when they're very young.



FIRST ADOPTION OPTION

Interested in adding rats to your family? [Make adoption your first option!](#) BC SPCA Community Animal Centres often have rats available for adoption.

Benefits of adoption from the BC SPCA:

- In-Centre physical exam performed by staff
- Medical treatment by a veterinarian, if required, while in care



BCSPCA

CARING FOR YOUR RAT HEALTH

A HEALTHY RAT

- ✓ Eyes are clean and bright
- ✓ Ears are clean with no discharge or unpleasant odour
- ✓ Coat is smooth and shiny
- ✓ Nose is clean with no discharge or redness
- ✓ Not too fat or too thin



MEDICAL CARE



Rats are a prey species. This means they tend to hide their symptoms when they're not feeling well. Watch out for changes to your rats' eating habits and other changes in their behaviour and routines. If you notice something different, contact a veterinarian. Rats usually live for about two years.

DENTAL CARE



To help wear down their ever-growing front teeth, provide your rats with chewing items such as cardboard, Timothy hay, wooden toys, and willow and apple sticks. Make sure the branches come from trees that haven't been treated with any chemicals.



TOILET TRAINING

Some rats can be trained to use a litter box, while others may never use one consistently. But it's worth a try! A plastic cat litter pan works well. You can also use a corner litter pan designed for small animals.

TOO MANY RATS!

Rats in shelters and rescues across B.C. are in need of new homes. *Try to make adoption your first option if you love rats!*

PREVENT UNWANTED LITTERS

Never keep male and female rats together, even for a short period (unless they are neutered or spayed). Rats multiply at an amazing rate. Females can have up to 12 litters in just one year, with anywhere from six to 12 young per litter. Baby rats need to be separated by sex at 25 days of age before they begin breeding.



COLD WEATHER TIPS



KEEP YOUR PET SAFE IN THE COLD

Pets can get cold and suffer injuries like frostbite on the tips of their ears, tail and paws. If they are willing to wear them, you can get them a coat and/or booties for warmth and protection. When the temperature falls below 0°C, keep outside walks shorter than usual, especially if your dog is older, has shorter fur, is a toy breed, has medical issues or is more sensitive to the cold.

SALT AND ICE MELT – PROTECT THEIR PAWS



Salt and ice melts used on sidewalks can hurt your dog's paws. Clean paws with warm water and towel dry them when you get back from a walk. **Tip:** you can use a plastic cup filled with lukewarm water and dip your dog's paw in and then towel dry them off. You can also massage petroleum jelly into their pads as a layer of protection before walks.

SIGNS OF FROSTBITE & HYPOTHERMIA IN PETS

- Pale, blueish or grey skin
- Swelling and painful to the touch
- Blisters
- Areas of blackened skin
- Shivering
- Pale or grey gums
- Lethargic
- Stumbling or unable to stand up or walk



TREATMENT – WHEN YOU GET INSIDE, WARM THEM UP!

Place frostbitten areas in a bowl of lukewarm water. Pat them dry and do not rub or massage the area. **DO NOT** use direct dry heat, such as a hairdryer or heating pad. If you warm up the area too quickly, it can cause more damage and be very painful.

Take your dog to see a veterinarian right away for additional care and treatment.

KEEP YOUR DOG BUSY INSIDE

- Hide treats or kibble around your home.
- Have stairs? If you and your dog are able, walk up and down the stairs in your building.
- Work for their meals! Create your own treat mat with a towel or thin blanket.

SPRINKLE KIBBLE



ROLL IT UP



TWIST IT



TIE A KNOT or TWO



RELEASE THE HOUND!



ANTIFREEZE ALERT

Antifreeze is a chemical used in cars. It contains ethylene glycol which is extremely poisonous to pets! Antifreeze is bright **green/yellow** in colour and tastes sweet to pets. Don't let your pet have a taste. **If you suspect your pet has licked antifreeze, get them to the veterinarian right away. They will not get better without emergency treatment.**



HOT WEATHER TIPS

KEEP YOUR PET SAFE WHEN TEMPERATURES RISE

As the temperatures rise, take extra care of yourself and your pets.

Pets can get heatstroke too. Learn how to keep your pets safe in hot weather.



SIGNS OF HEATSTROKE IN PETS

- Heavy panting
- Excess drooling
- Acts unsettled or panicked
- Weakness and muscle shaking or lack of coordination
- Convulsions, vomiting and collapse

WHAT TO DO IF YOUR PET HAS HEATSTROKE

- Move your pet to a cool, shady place
- Offer cool drinking water
- Wet your pet with cool water
- **Do not apply ice** as this will slow blood flow and discourage cooling
- Fan your pet to reduce the animal's body temperature
- Take your pet to a veterinarian as soon as possible for further treatment



BE SAFE ON WALKS

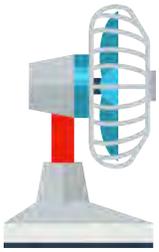
- Stick to shady and grassy areas on walks
- Avoid walks during the hottest part of the day (between 11 AM and 3 PM)
- Bring water on your walks to offer your dog

SIDEWALK TEST

If the pavement is too hot to touch with your palm, it's too hot for your dog!



TIPS TO STAY COOL



- Fans can offer a cool breeze but make sure your pet can move away if they choose
- Your pet may also enjoy a misting from a spray bottle
- Place frozen water bottles wrapped in towels or damp towels around your home so that your pet can lie by or on them
- Leave a bowl of ice cubes out for your pet to lick
- Check your local pet store for cooling mats and cooling bandanas for pets



FLAT-FACED DOGS

Dogs cool down by panting. Dogs such as pugs, Boston terriers, French bulldogs and shih tzus are more sensitive to heat due to their **flat faces** as air flow is restricted. When it's hot, take extra care to monitor your flat-faced dog and limit activity and time in the heat.



OPEN WINDOW ALERT

Even if you live in a high-rise building on a higher floor, your cat may still get brave and jump out or fall out of an open window. We've heard of cats who have fallen from the 17th floor! If you keep your windows open to help create a breeze in the heat, try to set up some screens or netting to keep your cat safe.



BCSPCA

HOW TO USE A MUZZLE



WHAT'S A MUZZLE?

A muzzle is a piece of equipment worn over a dog's snout to prevent them from biting or scavenging food or other objects from the ground.

WHY USE A MUZZLE?

Muzzles are useful tools to keep humans, other animals and your dog safe in the community. In the past, dogs wearing muzzles were often labeled as 'bad' or 'aggressive' and were scary for some people. Today, we know that pet guardians muzzle their dogs for a variety of reasons intended to keep their animals safe and happy.

You should use a muzzle if:

- Your dog is at the groomer or veterinarian and may bite because they're frightened.
- Your dog is at risk of biting someone or another animal.
- An animal control bylaw mandates your dog or their breed must wear a muzzle.
- Your dog continuously scavenges objects from the ground.
- You're working on training and need to keep everyone safe.



DO DOGS MIND WEARING MUZZLES?

No, muzzles aren't painful, although they can limit mobility of the mouth and feel strange on a dog's face at first. Some dogs may have a negative emotional response to them if they've been used to restrain them in the past for a procedure (e.g., grooming or nail trims), but all dogs can be trained to love wearing a muzzle.

RECOMMENDED MUZZLES

Choose a muzzle that's designed for the specific purpose you need. Make sure the muzzle is suited for your dog's breed and size.



FOR TRAINING & WALKING

Basket muzzles (rubber, plastic or metal) allow your dog to drink water and pant to cool down. While they may look scary, they're the most humane choice.

FOR VETERINARY USE

Soft, flat muzzles made of mesh, nylon, fabric or leather prevent a dog from panting. Panting is the way dogs cool down (a dog's way of sweating). These muzzles should only be used for short-term procedures like exams and grooming.



Dogs can't cool off by panting when wearing soft muzzles.



BCSPCA

HOW TO USE A MUZZLE

FITTING YOUR DOG FOR A MUZZLE

The muzzle should be:

- Snug, but not tight
- Allow your dog to open their mouth, but not all the way
- Adjustable

Muzzle companies have guidelines for sizing muzzles based on the breed and size of the dog. Visit your local pet store and ask for assistance in finding the right fit for your dog.



DO'S

Do look for an **AnimalKind.ca** accredited trainer to help you with training issues. The program provides BC SPCA-developed standards for positive, humane training.

Do stay aware of triggers that frighten your dog, even when they're comfortable wearing a muzzle. Having a muzzle doesn't mean people, places or other dogs aren't still scary. It's better to avoid the situations altogether even with the safety of a muzzle.



DON'TS

Don't leave the muzzle on all day.

Don't use a muzzle as the only way to deal with unwanted behaviours. You'll still want to use reward-based training and seek help from an **AnimalKind.ca** accredited trainer when needed.

Don't use a muzzle to stop your dog from barking.



HOW TO USE A MUZZLE

MUZZLE TRAINING

1 Teach your dog that the muzzle = yummy treat

Show your dog the muzzle, say “yes,” and give them a treat. Every time you show them the muzzle, give them a treat.

If your dog is uncomfortable or afraid of the muzzle:

- Put it on a table away from them and feed them on the other side of room.
- Keep it at a distance where they'll eat treats when it's in sight.
- Practice this and move the muzzle closer without causing them to leave the room.

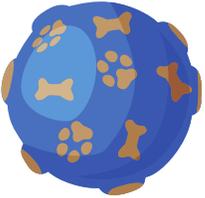
The goal: Your dog will look at the muzzle and then to you for a treat.



2 Teach your dog to wear the muzzle

Follow the training plan below to teach your dog to enjoy wearing a muzzle when they go out on walks and when visitors come to your home.

Work in three-minute sessions. Don't move on to the next step until your dog shows a happy response to the previous one.



STEP 1: Show your dog the muzzle. Then give them high-value treats or play a game of fetch.

STEP 2: Clip the muzzle around your dog's neck without putting it on their nose. Then give them high-value treats in playful manner (like tossing them from side to side).

STEP 3: Put some food into the muzzle (cup your hand so it doesn't fall out). Gently move the muzzle away from your dog's nose as they're eating from it. Allow your dog to put their nose into the muzzle. Don't put the muzzle onto your dog.

STEP 4: Increase the length of time your dog has their nose in the muzzle. Use squeeze cheese or Cheese Whiz.

STEP 5: Begin to lay the straps around your dog's neck while they have their nose in the muzzle. Don't attach them at this stage.

STEP 6: Loosely attach the straps around your dog's neck. Use squeeze cheese or a special treat.



! If your dog tries to paw at the muzzle to remove it, DON'T take it off at this time. Distract them by asking for some behaviours that they enjoy doing (like 'sit' or 'down'). Take the muzzle off when they're no longer trying to remove it. If your dog constantly tries to remove the muzzle, repeat some earlier steps to ensure they enjoy the muzzle before moving on.

LEARN MORE! Find videos and more information at spca.bc.ca/muzzles.

BCSPCA

OPIOID POISONING RESPONSE FOR PETS



Pets are curious, and some love to chew. **Watch your pet closely** to see if they may have chewed, inhaled or swallowed drugs, used foils or cookers.

Keep paraphernalia out of reach of pets.

Do you think your pet has swallowed or chewed drugs? Call a veterinarian or emergency clinic for advice. If you know it's opioids (heroin, fentanyl, morphine, codeine) and see signs of poisoning, **naloxone can be given to animals and should be administered right away.**

SIGNS OF OPIOID POISONING (overdose)

- Drowsiness or unconsciousness
- Difficulty standing/walking
- Unresponsive to name or familiar commands
- Slowed or absent breathing

RECOMMENDATION:

For dogs, place a muzzle on before treatment as dogs may respond unexpectedly and bite once they start breathing

DOSAGE

KITS with 0.4mg/1mL AMPOULES (vials)

4kg/9lb and over >> use **ONE FULL** ampoule (1mL)

Less than 4kg/9lb >> use **HALF*** of an ampoule (0.5ml)

*You can use the syringe and needle to measure out the exact amount but remove the needle prior to administration into the nose.

NASAL SPRAY 4 mg DOSE

One **FULL DOSE** can be used for animals **25kg/55lb and over**

ADMINISTRATION – INTRANASAL (into the nose)

AMPOULES (vials)

Hold snout closed, tilt up and **POUR** naloxone directly into one nostril

NASAL SPRAY

Place the tip of the nasal apparatus into one nostril and press plunger to deliver naloxone

If the pet remains unresponsive, immediately call an emergency veterinarian and transport animal.

REPEAT the dose every 2 minutes until the animal is breathing on its own for at least 5 minutes



If the animal isn't breathing, can I give rescue breaths (mouth-to-mouth/snout)?

For safety reasons, this is **NOT** recommended. Drugs cause abnormal behaviours and there is no way to know if an animal might wake up and bite.

AFTER CARE

Once breathing and alert, **monitor for at least an additional 30 minutes.** Keep another dose on hand as symptoms can return.

Just like people, pets need medical care after the reversal of opioid poisoning. It's recommended to take your pet to see a veterinarian following the administration of naloxone.