

Hamster care at a glance

Accommodation

Minimum size: 100cm x 50cm x 50cm.

Ideal location: quiet room – sensitive to noise and light.

Indoor only

Bar spacing: 1cm or less.

Substrate depth: 'Burrow-able' 20cm +

Suitable substrate types: Hemp, paper products (like Carefresh) wood pulp products (like Megazorb), shredded paper, shredded card, coco soil, hay.

Mixing substrates helps maintain burrow structures.

Nocturnal – mostly active during the night

Reproduction

Gestation period: 16-22 days (species dependent).

Age of sexual maturity: 4 -10 weeks (species dependent).

Split from mother and opposite sex litter mates: 4 weeks.

Split from same sex litter mates: By 8 weeks – sooner if they are starting to squabble.

Neutering: Not required.

Natural behaviours

Digging, burrowing, nesting, running, foraging, gnawing, hoarding food, sand bathing.

Average life span

1.5-3 years depending on species



Cleaning

Spot clean daily: remove uneaten fresh food and soiled bedding. Change the water.

Full clean: Every 2-4 weeks.

Return some used bedding in to the freshly cleaned cage.

Vaccinations required: No

Microchipping required: No

Companionship

- Most hamster species should not live in pairs or groups
- Roborovskis can live in same sex pairs but it is not necessary and there is a risk they may fight.

Diet

Omnivore – requires plant and animal-based food.

Main feed: 1 tsp high quality commercial mixed species-specific hamster food per day.

Additional food: See hamster feeding chart.

Enrichment

Provide: Wheel, wide tunnels, nesting material, multi-chamber hides, safe branches, cork logs, digging box, sand bath, sprigs of plants and seeds.

Appropriate wheel size:

- 27 -32cm for Syrian hamsters
- 25-27cm for Chinese hamsters
- 20-25cm for dwarf hamsters

Hamsters can be rehomed from 8 weeks old

Top tip

Hamsters feel safer when sleeping in a multi chamber hide as they like to sleep away from the entrance.

Harmful food

Rhubarb, onion, leeks, garlic, chocolate and kidney beans