

# Hamsters at a Glance

Difficulty of care: **Beginner**

Average lifespan: **1.5–3 years with proper care**

Average adult size: **2–13 inches**

Diet: **Omnivorous**

Minimum habitat size: **24" L x 12" W x 12" H**

Temperature: **65–80 F**

**Fun fact ↗** There are over 20 different hamster species, including the Syrian hamster, Chinese hamster, and the Roborovski dwarf hamster.



## Enclosure Setup & Maintenance

- Appropriate cages vary by hamster species. The Syrian hamster needs a wired cage, while the Roborovski dwarf hamster should have a solid enclosure.
- The bigger the cage, the better, with more room to run and play.
- Add in a hamster wheel and plenty of chew toys. Hamster teeth continue to grow throughout their life and they use these toys to keep their teeth at a manageable length.
- Hamsters like to burrow, so include paper or fiber-based bedding. You can also use recycled newspaper, unused toilet paper, or new paper towels.
- Spot clean cages every day, remove uneaten food and soiled bedding. Thoroughly clean cages every week or more often, if needed.

## Supply Checklist

- Appropriately sized enclosure or cage
- Bedding
- Food and treats
- Food dish
- Water bottle
- Exercise wheel
- Chew toys
- Hide box and other décor
- Cleaning supplies



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# Handling

While some hamsters may enjoy being held, not all of them do. Give your new pet time to get used to their new surroundings before handling them.

When picking up a hamster, put your hand in the cage for a few seconds, lift from underneath, and bring them out of the cage facing you. Cradle their body from the bottom and be sure not to squeeze.

Never wake a sleeping hamster and don't corner them in their cage as you try to reach for them. If hamsters feel threatened, they could bite.

## Fun fact ↗

Hamsters have limited vision and can only see a little bit of color.

## Diet

Hamsters are omnivores and eat a plant-based diet with occasional animal protein, like unseasoned chicken or hard-boiled eggs. They should have one meal daily, mostly of commercial hamster food pellets.

While hamsters can eat some human foods, they shouldn't have access to all of them. Limit foods that are high in calories, sugar, or fat to small quantities and on rare occasions.

## Health

Hamsters should have shiny, full coats, bright eyes, and eat when hungry. They should be regularly active in their cages.

Look out for signs of an unhealthy hamster, like hair loss, a matted coat, loss of appetite, or discharge from the ears, nose, or eyes. If you notice a hunched posture, diarrhea, or skin lumps and bumps, immediately contact your vet.

## Fun fact ↗

Hamster teeth never stop growing—these pets need chew toys to keep them manageable.

