

Syrian Hamster

Golden, Teddy bear (long haired), Fancy (bi-colored)

(Mesocricetus auratus)



Adult Size	4 to 5 inches long
Lifespan	2 to 3 years
Male/Female Difference	Sexing hamsters is done by eyeing the distance between the urethra and the anus; the distance is further apart in males. Both are equally handleable. Females may be more defensive while trying to nest or raise its young.
Compatibility	Adult hamsters are solitary. Never keep more than one in the same cage. Hamsters are territorial and will aggressively stress each other out until the other leaves. This rule still applies if they are raised together from the same litter.
Origin	Europe, Asia, Australia.
Climate	Desert and arid grassy plains.
Day Cycle	Nocturnal. Hamsters play at night and sleep during the day.
Temperature	Hamsters do well at average household temperatures. Make sure the cage is well ventilated, out of direct sunlight and drafts.
Lighting	Being nocturnal, bright lights can be harsh for their eyes.
Humidity	Hamsters do well in most indoor humidity. Keep their bedding dry at all times.
Habitat/Territory	Hamsters are burrowing animals.
Substrate/Bedding	Provide a safe and soft bedding, the less dusty the better. Cedar bedding can be toxic and pine too dusty. Good litters are shredded or pelleted aspen or recycled paper products. Supply nesting materials and dry hays.

Hiding Place/Den	Offer chew safe and non-toxic hamster huts, tubes, and wooden hamster toys. Glue on empty paper towel or toilette paper rolls is toxic. Offer nesting materials that will not bind around limbs or cause intestinal damage.
Cage Type	Aquariums, plastic cages with tube accessories, or wire. All should be escape proof, ventilated, and easy to clean. Hamsters love to wander at night. Supply the largest cage that's possible.
Diet	A few critter cubes and 1-2 tbls of high quality hamster seed mix is given as a staple. Supply a variety of leafy greens and vegetables in small quantities. Avoid spoilage. Fruits should be given to avoid diarrhea. Timothy hay should be given at all times to aid in digestion. Try not to focus on one thing, give good variety. A tiny bit of yoghurt is good for intestinal health.
Supplements	Vitamins in water help supply nutrients missing from captive diets. Hamsters are natural insect eaters. Offer occasional meal worms, crickets, cat or dog kibble, or small dog biscuits. Bland proteins like boiled egg are good.
Diet Precautions	Do not give chocolate, candy, or anything with caffeine. Giving too many greens can cause impacted pouches or intestinal disorders.
Feeding	Placing food in a bowl will help prevent over feeding. Hamsters will move most of their food into their nest and bury it for later, so always double check their hiding spots before giving them more food.
Water Source	Water bottles are best. Wash the bottle in between refills. Supply fresh filtered, non-chlorinated water at all times.
Grooming	Hamsters generally lick themselves clean. Grooming your hamster will help socialize it and prevent skin ailments. Using a cat wipe twice a week will help keep the fur healthy. Use a soft bristle brush often to stimulate the hair follicles and remove debris. Keep an eye on the teeth. If they have an overshot, they may need to be clipped. We can do that for you.
Oral and Foot Care	Hamsters have incisors that need to constantly be filed down. Keep soft wood chews, pumice stone, and treat sticks in the cage. Rotate different types to keep the hamster's interest. Older hamsters may need to have their nails clipped. Use safe ramps and running wheels that will prevent leg injury.

Proper Handling

If the hamster is sleeping, wake gently and always let them smell your hand first. Gently shoo the hamster into one of its hiding places. Pick up the hiding place with the hamster still in it. Holding still with hiding place in hand, offer the other hand to climb out on to of its own free will. Stay close to the ground in case it falls. Offer treats for acceptance and reward.

Habitat Maintenance

Hamsters tend to eliminate in the same area of the cage. Place a litter pan in that area with a little soiled litter for scent. Spot clean the cage daily. Change the litter once a week and wash cage thoroughly with warm soapy water.

Health Concerns

Diarrhea due to poor diet, stress, and/or cage cleanliness. Respiratory distress can be due to poor ventilation, drafts, noxious odors, and dusty litter. Overgrown teeth due to poor chewing stimulation. Congenital cancers are a slight risk. Maintain a healthy environment and diet to prevent poor health.