



TOP PIGGY CARE TIPS



Get ready for your new
family members

WHAT YOUR GUINEA PIG COMES WITH:

- Electronic adoption pack which includes vet history.
- Adoption fee payment is by bank card at the centre or bank transfer (for animals in foster homes). Our bank details will be included in your adoption pack.
- Our Feeding Plan and Fresh Food Guide.
- They will also have hay/box with their scent on to help settle them into their new home.
- Our help and guidance throughout the life of your new furry friend.

WHAT DO I NEED TO DO?



PRIORITY TO DO LIST:

- Find and register with a local 'piggy-savvy' vet now, this can normally be done over the phone without taking your piggy. **See: Vet Stuff page.**
- Check you have all the items on our **Guinea Pig Shopping List.**
- Send us photos of your new piggies home all set up.
- Send us photos of any existing piggy's home (if applicable).
- Send us vaccination records of any cats, dogs, rabbits or ferrets in your home.
- Send us proof of ID e.g copy of Driver's license or passport.



PIGGY SHOPPING LIST



Food stuff

- ☐ Water bottle (1 per pig) and water bowl
- ☐ Good quality hay (not supermarket/petshop bought).
- ☐ Suitable veggies (feeding regime will be provided at point of adoption).
- ☐ Hay rack/s and other items to stuff with hay ie. cardboard tubes.

Entertainment

- ☐ Hidey huts (1 per piggy) ie. plastic pigloo
- ☐ Tunnels/arches (wooden or plastic).
Should be used with newly introduced piggies rather than pigloo with single entrance.
- ☐ Cardboard boxes with entry holes cut into the side to chew (remove any tape).
- ☐ Cosy fabric bed (1 per piggy). There are many different designs, check out Etsy!

Out and about

- ☐ Pet carrier, ideally with top and front opening (avoid fabric designs).
- ☐ Soft bedding blankets to line carrier and hidey bed or hut to put inside to make them feel safer.

Grooming

- ☐ Small pet grooming brush
- ☐ Claw clippers

Litter stuff

- ☐ 2 Litter trays (for 2 piggies, each pig needs their own tray option).
- ☐ Newspapers or paper-based litter to line trays.

Housing stuff

☐ INDOOR PIGGIES

C&C set up, min. 5x2 cubes for 2 pigs (see 'Housing' page for more details).

☐ OUTDOOR PIGGIES

Same sized set up to indoor (6ftx2ft) but inside a shed. We do not rehome piggies to live in standalone, outdoor hutches.

Please speak to our team before purchasing any outdoor set up, so we can advise.

What you don't need!

- **A food bowl: scatter feed instead!**
- **Shop-bought treats, salt/mineral licks, vitamin C drops or pellets: they are not needed with a good diet :)**

HOUSING



Setting up a pig palace

Our suggested set up for your piggy!

You can find a comprehensive housing guide on our blog here:

rspca-manchesterandsalford.org.uk/gpaw-blog-environment/

Spread out resources and don't leave large, open spaces. Piggies feel safer in spaces filled with hidey places and corridors!

Archway with 2 exit points and also flat platform for jumping on! Use for newly bonded piggies rather than single-entry huts.

Cosy beds (1 per pig). They come in all different designs ie. donut, sack, tunnel. Have options in the open but also inside archways/pigloos.



Water bottle (1 per pig)

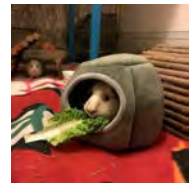


Litter trays (1 per piggy) lined with newspaper and filled with hay. Top up every day and empty min. twice a week.



Plastic '**Pigloo**' (1 per piggy).

Additional hidey spaces like this fabric hut.



Base covering: Either newspaper + hay, towel + fleece or washable puppy pads: floor should be made of plastic or lino. Search '*Fleece Method*' online.

Hay racks and other sources to stuff with hay daily, here is a repurposed wooden baby toy!



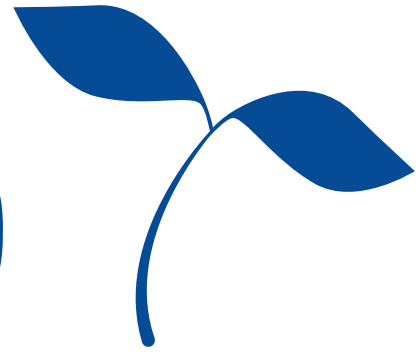
Why do piggies need so much space? Well check out this video to see why!

www.youtube.com/watch?v=24u0yxK8030

Top tip: You can buy C&C setups pre-built online for around £60 or build your own buying the C&C grids and plastic base separately. Search '**Buy C&C cage**' on Google.



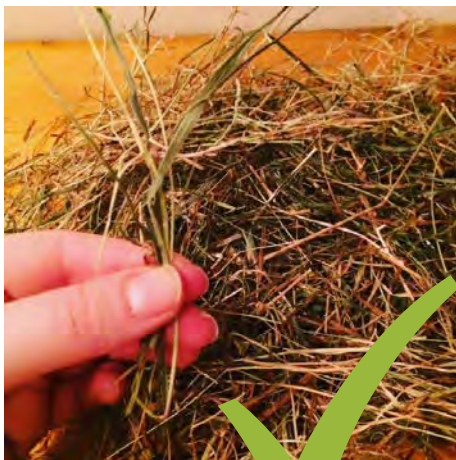
HEY! YOU NEED HAY!



Hay should be 90% of your piggy's diet but not all hay is good hay!

Avoid feeding hay from a shrink-wrapped plastic bag.

Hay should be long-stemmed, fresh smelling and lush looking.



- You need lots of hay, you'll be topping up daily and emptying all litter trays and hay twice-weekly. It's cheaper to buy in bales (if you have storage) and better quality than supermarket, vacuum packed options.
- Avoid alfalfa hay entirely, it is too high in calcium, instead choose Meadow Hay from bales or Timothy Hay.



Retailers that sell hay bales/loose hay:

Shentons in Handforth

Cheshire Pet Supplies in Altrincham

Creature Comforts in Heywood

Google 'farm feed suppliers'

Online retailers that sell high quality and different varieties of hay) that you can use as your 'main hay' or in addition to farm bales:

www.timothyhay.co.uk

Hay Experts

Happy Hay Company

Hay Box (allows you to set up a regular delivery!)



Top tip: Farm shops and horse feed shops often sell bales of hay that are suitable for guinea pigs and rabbits but just make sure it's hay and not haylage (fermented hay) or straw (waste produce of wheat).

FEEDING TIME



We will provide a copy of our feeding regime at the centre to keep things simple. Please stick to the veg recommended, as there is a lot of misinformation on the internet about what fresh food a piggy can eat!

The most important thing to express is that piggies need to be fed a diet that is mainly good quality hay/grass (constantly available) and leafy green veg, such as romaine lettuce with additional veggies high in vitamin C (they can't make this themselves, like us humans!) like pepper.



Veggies should be scattered to encourage foraging behaviours and hay located in litter trays, hay tracks and other spots for enrichment.

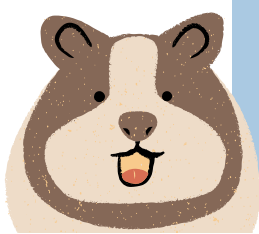
DANGER – GUT STASIS



Gut stasis is a silent killer and we like everyone to be aware that if a piggy goes off their food this requires immediate veterinary attention as they can become critically ill within hours.

For more info have a look here:

rspca-manchesterandsalford.org.uk/gpaw-blog-health/



Top tip: Always avoid fruit, as it is not natural for a pig's digestive system to cope with such sugary food items. Take care with high calcium greens such as kale, they shouldn't be fed daily. Also greens high in oxalic acid such as spinach should be avoided.

VET STUFF



Piggy-savvy vets

The best type of vet to use is an exotic vet specialist as they have additional training to treat guinea pigs.

Exotic vets in the area include:

Ashleigh Vets in Chorlton

Cheshire Pets in Holmes Chapel

Liverpool University Small Animal Vets

Rutland House in St Helens



Routine vet care

Guinea pigs **do not need** the following:

- Vaccinations
- Flea and worm treatment
- Bathing (as a matter of routine)



However they do need:

- **Monthly claw clipping and a health checks** (we run a FREE welfare event in Salford if you need our help with this!) or you can do at home. See our blog for health checklist: rspca-manchesterandsalford.org.uk/gpaw-blog-health/
- **Long-haired piggies will need regular trims** particularly on their rear ends to keep clean and in the Summer; to help keep cool. If your piggy is older or struggling to keep clean they may need a bum wash but this should be done in as infrequently as possible in a small amount of water.
- **Piggies have a temperature tolerance range of 15-25 degrees.** In hot weather provide fans/shade/cool packs and in cold provide extra hay in bury into.

EMERGENCY!

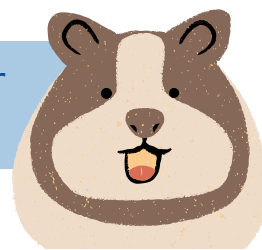


IF YOUR GUINEA PIG IS:

- NOT EATING
- NOT DRINKING
- NOT TOILETING
- HUNCHED, QUIET OR ACTING DIFFERENTLY

SEEK VET ADVICE IMMEDIATELY

Top tip: Check out our social media and website for welfare clinic dates throughout the year!



GOT A QUESTION



Our team are highly trained in guinea pig welfare and behaviour, if you have a query they are here to help! It doesn't matter how long ago you adopted from us.

Contact us:

adoptions@rspca-manchesterandsalford.org.uk

SOCIALS

We love to hear about ex-residents in their new homes, share your pictures with us on Facebook and Insta:

www.facebook.com/RSPCAManchesterandsalford

https://www.instagram.com/rspca_mcr_salford/

