

Fostering A Pregnant Guinea Pig:



Setting Up:

Much like pregnant cats, pregnant guinea pigs should be kept in a quiet space away from unsupervised other animals to limit stress. Guinea pigs should be kept in their enclosure except for supervised exercise time (at least 30 minutes a day to stretch their legs)- during which you should monitor for potential hazards like chewing wires, plants or things that could potentially harm them. Guinea pigs, unlike rabbits, do not build nests or show nesting behavior, so set up the enclosure with some soft fleece or pre-made nesting materials. Provide a hiding spot within the enclosure, which can be as simple as a small cardboard hut to provide them a place to feel extra secure in.

The Pregnancy:

Guinea Pigs typically only have 2-4 babies, instead of the sometimes large litters of kittens! By the seventh week of pregnancy, the babies should make up about ½ of the mom's total body weight, and you should be able to see the babies movement through the belly skin. The gestation period for a guinea pig 58 to 72 days.

***Fun Fact- a baby guinea pig is called a pup!**

Giving Birth:

Guinea pigs typically give birth during the night, so it is common to miss the actual delivery. A momma guinea pig will squat down on all four limbs, and an uncomplicated delivery only usually takes about 30 minutes total, with 3-5 minutes between the birth of each individual "pup". The mom guinea pig should clean the newborns, but this may happen once she gives birth to all of them if she does not do this individually. If you notice a pup with the sac remaining over its face, break the membrane open with your finger-nail.

Diet:

Guinea Pigs should always have access to pellets, hay and fresh water! Fruits and veggies can be an important part of the diet of a guinea pig as it adds needed vitamin c. Below are some foods Guinea Pigs can and can't eat!

Can eat: Romaine lettuce, kale, parsley, cilantro, red, green or yellow peppers, broccoli, tomatoes, carrots, zucchini, oranges, apples, strawberries, bananas

Can't eat: Iceberg lettuce, mushrooms, avocados, cabbage, potatoes, onions, chocolate



Guinea Pig Facts:

- Guinea pigs have teeth that are constantly growing. This means they need to munch on food lots and lots to grind their teeth down.
- Guinea pigs are very sociable animals and are happiest living in a group. They should not be kept on their own as they get very lonely.
- These animals are crepuscular, which means they tend to be most active around dawn and dusk.
- Guinea Pigs can live up to 8 years with the proper care!

Baby Guinea Pig Development:

Unlike baby rabbits, guinea pig pups are born fully furred with their eyes and ears open, teeth erupted and are able to walk around shortly after birth!

Guinea Pigs start eating solid food when they are a few days old but also need to nurse for about three weeks before being weaned from their mother- they can also begin to reproduce at this age so it is important to separate the genders early on, which the shelter staff can help you determine and manage. It is important to let the Foster Care Manager known when the pups are born in order to arrange to have them brought in at exactly 3 weeks to avoid any additional pregnancies. Guinea Pig Pups can be handled from day one, and while very fragile, should be handled and interacting with people daily to become well-rounded, hand- tame family pets!

Please Call the Shelter or Foster Care Manager If You Notice:

- Excessive bloody vaginal discharge
- Green, ink like vaginal discharge
- Extreme lethargy
- Contractions for 30 minutes without a baby being born