



How to Take Care of Pets

This easy-to-read reference guide is specially designed to help children learn and care for their pets.

It provides basic information and practical common sense advice on pets and pet care. In all, this guide covers nine types of pets.

A must-have for first time pet owners!



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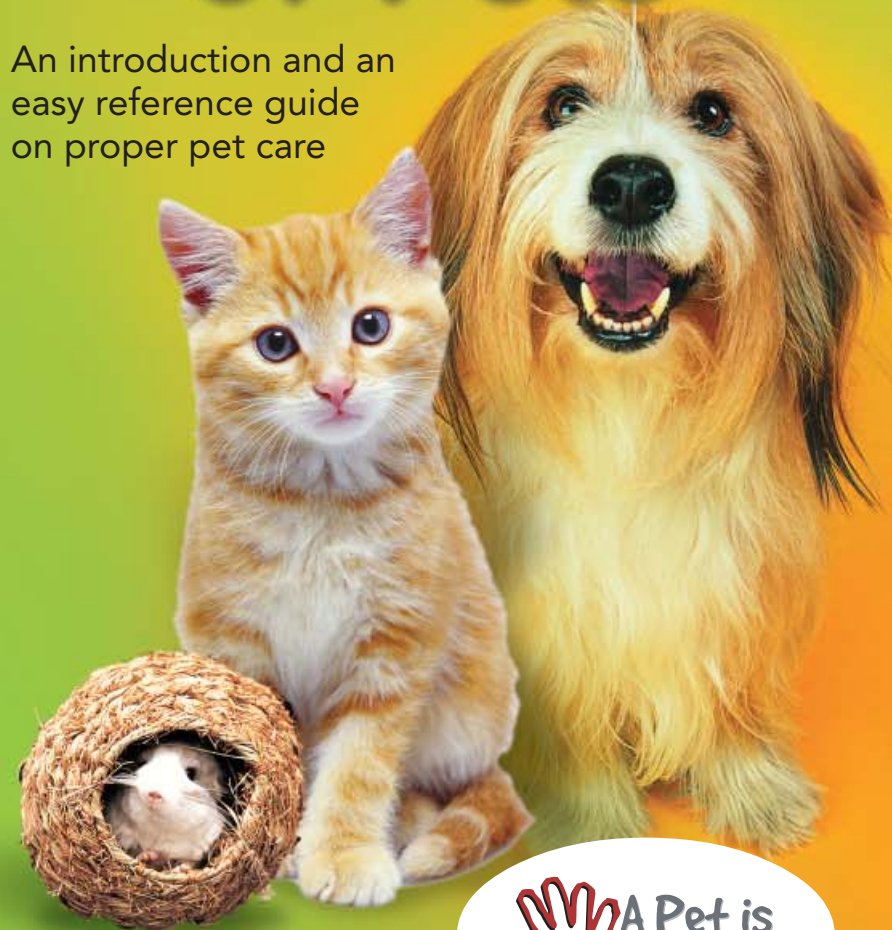


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How to Take Care of Pets

An introduction and an
easy reference guide
on proper pet care



A Responsible Pet Ownership Initiative by  AVA



What are DOGS?



Dogs are mammals and distant relatives of wolves. Dogs can smell, see and hear much better than we can. In the wild, these senses help them hunt for food. As pets, they get their food from their owners. There are many different types or breeds of dogs. Dogs of different breeds can look very different and can behave differently too.

What are dogs like?

Dogs like to have other dogs or humans around them. If they are alone for long periods, they become bored. They bark and make other sounds to communicate. Dogs also bark to get your attention. Dogs can be trained to do things, like fetch a ball or sit when you tell them to. Some can also be trained to rescue people or guide the blind. Dogs need exercise and a lot of attention. In the wild, they follow a leader. In your house, they look to you as their leader. This means you need to teach your dog what she should and should not do.



Pets are big responsibilities and not everyone is able to take care of one. It is important to find out more before you make the decision to get a pet. This starter kit has been made especially to help you but you can also find out more by reading pet books and talking to people who know about pets.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dogs	1
Cats	5
Chinchillas	9
Guinea pigs	13
Hamsters	17
Rabbits	21
Birds	25
Fish	29
Terrapins	33

What type of dog should I get?

If you live in a HDB flat or do not have much room at home, you should not get a big dog, like a Golden Retriever or German Shepherd Dog. Big dogs eat more and usually require more exercise. Some dogs are active whilst others prefer to rest quietly around the house. Before you decide on the breed of dog to get, you should read up and learn more about the various breeds of dogs. Getting the right breed is very important.



Big dogs like Golden Retrievers cannot be kept in HDB flats

What my pet dog needs

- a dog licence
- food & water
- a food dish
- a water dish
- a comfortable place to rest
- collar & leash
- shampoo
- nail clippers
- grooming equipment for long hair (comb, brush)
- toys
- muzzle (for some dogs)
- and lots of time and love from me



Dogs can live up to 20 years!

How do I look after my dog?



Puppies need three to four meals a day. Older dogs can be fed once or twice a day. It is good to bathe your dog once a week. They should not be bathed too often or their skin and coat will become too dry. Some dogs with long fur need you to comb and brush their fur often. Some dogs also need to be taken to the groomer, who is like a pet hairdresser, or their coat can become very messy. When dogs are sick or need shots, they need to see an animal doctor, a veterinarian. They may also need medicine to get rid of stomach worms. A veterinarian will be able to answer your questions on your dog's health.

Dogs usually require more exercise than they can get in the house. You should therefore walk your dog one to three times a day. Always keep her leash on her collar or she could easily run where she is not allowed. During the walks, dogs will usually do their toilet. You need to pick up their faeces. Leaving the faeces on the ground is irresponsible and against the law. It will dirty the environment and someone might step on it. You need to train your dog to go to the toilet only in her own toilet corner at home or when she is on a walk.

You should also train her to behave and not chew up your things or bark too much. If you do not have the time to train her, she could become naughty and do things that she shouldn't. Never leave your dog outside in hot weather or rain, as she will fall sick.



Bathing a dog takes time

What do dogs eat?

Dogs eat any kind of meat, but did you know they also eat grains and fruits and vegetables? Dogs need a balanced diet just like the rest of us so it isn't a good idea to feed them only one type of food. Prepared dog food that you can buy from shops usually has everything that your pet needs. There's both dry and canned/wet food. There is also special food for puppies, adult dogs and older dogs. Dogs need to drink water every day. Dogs will eat more than they need if given the chance. This means you shouldn't feed your dog too much, or give her too many treats as rewards, or she will become fat and unhealthy.



Should I let my dog breed?

NO! Puppies may be cute but there are too many dogs around and not enough good owners for all of them. We shouldn't add to the problem by allowing our dog to breed. When our dogs breed they also experience stress. You should get your dog neutered or spayed. Neutering or spaying (also called sterilisation) is an operation done by the veterinarian that prevents your pet from having babies. It also makes your pet healthier. There are many dogs for adoption at the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals - go and visit today!



What are CATS?



Cats are meat-eating mammals. They are cousins of wild cats like lions and tigers. Cats can see and hear very well. This helps them to hunt for their food. As pets however, they depend on their owners for food. Cats have very flexible bodies and they can jump better and move around much faster than we can. The pet cat is different from wild cats as pet cats have lived closely with humans for a very long time. There are many different types of pet cats. Some, like the Persians, have long fur. Some are bigger and some smaller. Cats that do not belong to anyone are called stray or feral cats.

What are cats like?

Pet cats can be very independent and do not need your attention as much as say the pet dog. That does not mean you can ignore or forget about them! Cats might not come to you when you call if they are not in the mood. They take time to train so you must be very patient with your cat. Like people, one cat is different from the next. They can also be very playful and are easily excited by moving objects. Cats often clean themselves with their tongue, especially after each meal. Cats also sleep a lot - up to 18 hours a day!



How do I look after my cat?

Cats don't really need baths unless they get dirty or have fleas - these are insects that can make your pet itchy and sick. Some cats with long fur need you to groom or brush their fur. You to clean their litterboxes daily (cats do not like to use dirty ones).



Clean your cat's litterbox every day



When cats are sick or need shots, they need to see an animal doctor, a veterinarian. They may also need medicine to get rid of worms. A veterinarian will be able to answer your questions on your cat's health.

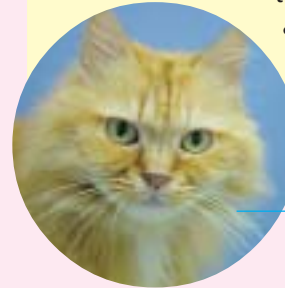
Cats will usually have enough exercise at home. If cats are kept in cages for most of the day, they need to be allowed out to play. You can also give your cat toys to play with.



What my pet cat needs

- food & water
- a food dish
- a water dish/bottle
- a comfortable place to rest
- a litter box (which it uses as a toilet)
- grooming equipment, if it has long hair (comb, brush)
- shampoo
- nail clippers
- toys and a scratching post
- and lots of time and love from me!

Cats
can live up to
20 years!



Cats with long fur need to be brushed regularly

You should keep your cats indoors

The outdoors is not a good place for your cat. Keep your cat indoors so that she doesn't become sick or get into an accident.

Outside, she might also disturb your neighbours or get into fights with other cats.



A cat is enjoying a nap in the safety of his home

What do cats eat?

Cats eat any kind of meat, but did you know they also eat grains and fruits and vegetables? Cats need a balanced diet just like the rest of us so it isn't a good idea to feed it only one sort of food. Prepared cat food that you can buy from shops usually has everything that your pet needs to eat.



Don't feed your cat too much. Otherwise, it will get fat & unhealthy.

Cats need to drink water every day. Most cats only eat what they need but it is good not to feed your cat too much or she will get fat and be unhealthy.

Should I let my cat breed?

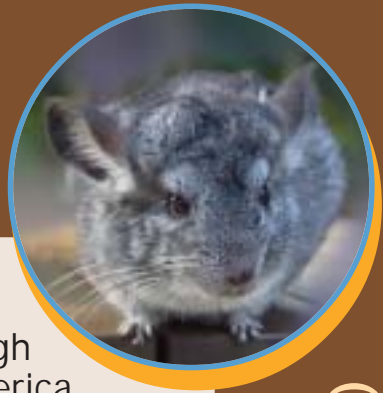
NO! There are too many cats around and not enough good owners for all of them. We shouldn't add to the problem by allowing our cat to breed. When our cats breed they also experience stress.

You should get your cat neutered or spayed. Neutering or spaying (also called sterilisation) is an operation done by the veterinarian that prevents your pet from having babies. It also makes your pet healthier.



Kittens may be cute but they all need a good home

What are CHINCHILLAS?



Chinchillas are rodents just like hamsters. In the wild, they live high up on the mountains of South America, where it is really, really cold. That is why they have very thick fur. Like all rodents, chinchillas have teeth that grow throughout their lives. They use them to chew on plant matter like plant roots and bark. There are very few chinchillas in the wild right now. They are "endangered" because they could go extinct (die out like the dinosaurs) if people continue to hunt and kill them for their wonderful fur. No one is supposed to hunt them anymore but some people still do it illegally. Pet chinchillas are now bred on farms.

What are chinchillas like?



Because of their thick fur coat, chinchillas need cool surroundings. Singapore's weather is too hot for them. If it gets too warm, chinchillas could faint or die. At home, it is best to switch on the

air conditioner or fan to lower the temperature and humidity (the amount of water vapour in the air). Chinchillas can move around very fast and hop quite high. Chinchillas sleep in the day and are awake at night. Chinchillas can be friendly but they also like some quiet time alone by themselves. They do not like to be cuddled too much. Chinchillas become stressed easily. You need to be really gentle and patient with your chinchilla or she could fall ill. Put her cage someplace quiet and comfortable.



What my pet chinchilla needs

- a cage with a solid floor, NOT one with wires at the bottom
- food & water
- water bottle
- food dish
- bedding such as aspen (NOT pine shavings)
- dust (for bathing)
- toys (such as a wheel or tunnels)
- lots of love and time from me!

Chinchillas

can live up to
15 years!

How do I look after my chinchilla?

Chinchillas need to be watched carefully when you let them out of their cage. It is very difficult to toilet train a chinchilla so you will need to pick up her droppings every time she comes out to play. Chinchillas also like to chew on things so make sure she is not biting your books, wires or your table! If they are too excited, it might be difficult to get them back inside the cage. If you try to catch them, they might get scared and run further away.

The bedding or litter needs to be changed every few days or it will smell. Your chinchilla should have a cage that is tall enough for her to jump and play in. You can feed your chinchilla twice a day. Try to keep to the same time of feeding or she could get upset. Change the water in her bottle every day so it is fresh and clean.

Chinchillas do not bathe in water like you do. They take sand baths. Place bath sand (you can get this from a pet shop) in a container for your chinchilla to have a sand bath. Your chinchilla will roll around in the sand to get clean.



Chinchillas don't bathe in water.
They take sand baths.

Chinchillas can also fall sick and when that happens, they need to see the veterinarian, an animal doctor. A veterinarian will be able to answer your questions on your chinchilla's health. However, because the chinchilla is a new pet in Singapore, it may be that not all veterinarians will be familiar with them.

What do chinchillas eat?

Chinchillas are herbivores. This means they eat plant matter and do not eat meat. Chinchillas need a balanced diet, so you should not feed your chinchilla only one type of food. Chinchillas can be fed pellets that are especially made for them.

Chinchillas also eat dried grass, called hay. You can buy this at the petshop. It is best not to pick any grass outside as they could have been sprayed with chemicals or dirtied by other animals.

You can also feed them fresh vegetables and fruits such as carrot, xiao pai chai or apple. Chinchillas like raisins and other dried fruits and you can give them these as treats. Feed them only 2-3 pieces a day. Too many treats will give your chinchilla a tummy ache.



Chinchillas like raisins and other dried fruits but too much could make them sick

What are GUINEA PIGS?



Guinea pigs are rodents like hamsters, mice, chinchillas and porcupines. Rodents have teeth that grow throughout their lives. There are different breeds of guinea pigs. Some have short, smooth fur whilst others have such long fur that it covers their eyes! There are even guinea pigs with curly fur. Guinea pigs have a very good sense of smell and hearing. These senses help them find food and escape from predators. Guinea pigs grow to about the size of a small rabbit.

What are guinea pigs like?

Guinea pigs are active in the night and rest in the day. They are timid and shy animals but do not usually bite. When they hear loud noises, they will quickly hide in a corner or stand very still. Guinea pigs usually do not like to be picked up.



They prefer to play on the ground or sit on your lap. They will need a gentle and patient owner who enjoys watching and petting them. In the wild, guinea pigs live in groups. In your home, they would not

want to be left alone for too long or ignored. Guinea pigs make squealing noises when it is feeding time. Guinea pigs use their saliva and their paws to clean their fur.

What do guinea pigs eat?

Guinea pigs are herbivores. This means they eat plant matter and do not eat meat. Guinea pigs need a balanced diet, just like the rest of us. There are pellets especially made for guinea pigs. Make sure the guinea pig food contains Vitamin C. This is important for your guinea pig because they cannot make their own. Store the food in an airtight container and a cool place properly, as the food will lose the Vitamin C after a while.

Guinea pigs also like hay (dried grass), fresh vegetables and fruits like carrots, grapes and oranges. But do not feed your guinea pig too much vegetable or she will get a stomachache. Give your guinea pig hay that is especially for pets. Grass from outside might be sprayed with poisonous chemicals or dirtied by other animals. Do not feed your guinea pig too much food or she will get fat. Guinea pigs need fresh, clean water every day.



Guinea pigs like to eat dried grass, fresh vegetables and fruits

How many shall I get?

Because they like to have company, you might want to get two guinea pigs of the same sex. Rabbits may not make good friends for them as they can kick a guinea pig.

Don't breed your guinea pigs



What my pet guinea pig needs

- a cage (with a solid floor is best!)
- food & water
- a water bottle
- a food dish
- bedding
- toys
- grooming equipment (comb, brush) if my guinea pig has long fur
- nail clippers
- lots of love and attention from me!

Guinea pigs
can live from
4 - 8 years!

Guinea pigs usually spend most of their lives in their cages so it is important to make it as interesting and as comfortable as possible.

How do I look after my guinea pig?



Guinea pigs have very small legs and feet compared to rabbits. It is dangerous for them to stay in cages with bars on the bottom. Their legs can get stuck in them. You can get a cage with a solid bottom or make sure they have a large board to sleep on.

You need to change their bedding every day or it will be smelly. Make sure that your guinea pig has fresh food and water every day. You can feed them once or twice a day.

If your guinea pig is sick, you need to bring her to the veterinary clinic where she can see the animal doctor, called a veterinarian, or vet for short. A vet will be able to answer any questions you have on your guinea pig's health. When their nails grow too long, have a vet or someone who knows how to trim your guinea pig's nails. Bathe your guinea pig when she is dirty but not too often.



You may need to brush your guinea pig regularly if it has long fur

What are HAMSTERS?



Hamsters are rodents like guinea pigs, mice, gerbils and rats. Rodents have teeth that grow throughout their lives. There are four common types of pet hamsters - campbells, roborovskis, winter whites and syrians. The first three types are smaller. They are also called dwarf hamsters. Syrians are also called golden hamsters.

What are hamsters like?

Hamsters sleep in the day and wake up at night. Hamsters can carry a lot of food in their cheek pouches. They store this food somewhere to eat later. Hamsters can move very fast and may not like to be touched. Some hamsters bite. Their bites are deep and painful.

However, if someone has played with the hamster since it was young, it will usually let people hold it. Hamsters bite when they are scared or when they are not held properly. You need to be careful with hamsters because they can get injured if they fall or are squeezed too tightly.

Which type of hamster should I get?

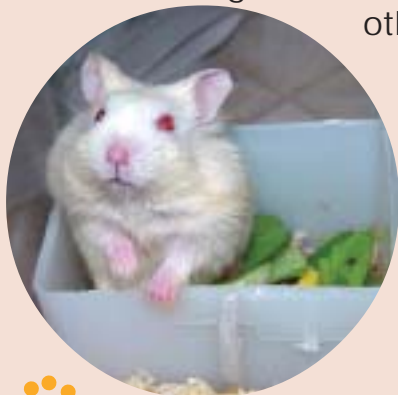
All types of hamsters require care from their owners. There are many different colours of hamsters. The roborovski however has only one fur colour - sandy brown. Some of the smaller hamsters move very fast and are usually more fun to look at than to play with.



Roborovski hamsters are the smallest type of pet hamster. They move very fast.

How many should I get?

Different types of hamsters do not usually get along. Syrian hamsters like to be alone. They will fight with other hamsters living with them. It is not true that they are lonely without another hamster friend. This means it's best to get one syrian hamster if you only have one cage. Dwarf hamsters can sometimes get along with others of the same type but there are also some hamsters that would rather be alone. If you are keeping two hamsters together, give them plenty of hiding places and toys and check your hamsters often for any wounds.



What do hamsters eat?

Hamsters are omnivores. This means they eat both plant matter and meat. A complete hamster food made up of seeds and dried fruits and vegetables is usually best. Small amounts of fresh food like green leafy vegetables, carrots, corn, apples and grapes can be fed. Hamsters love sunflower seeds but too many will make them ill.



How do I hold a hamster?

Young hamsters are usually more jumpy and difficult to hold. Pick hamsters up by cupping them gently and slowly in your hands. It is important to be careful and gentle so that you do not scare the hamster. Hold the hamster over the cage so that if it jumps suddenly, it won't be hurt. Hamsters hardly ever stay still. As hamsters grow older they may slow down and be easier to hold.



How do I look after my hamster?

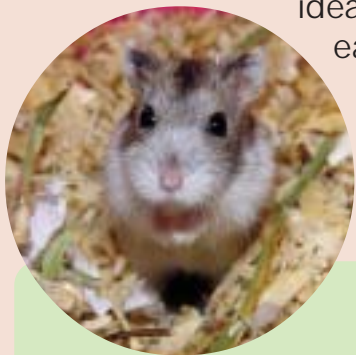
Change the bedding at least once a week. The cage can be washed with water and vinegar to remove stains. You can feed your hamster once a day, depending on how much you put in. Hamsters will "pouch" it (put it in their cheek pouches) or collect it in a corner. Water needs to be supplied all the time. Hamsters clean themselves with their saliva and their paws. You don't have to bathe them.

Should I breed my hamster?

No! Hamsters can get pregnant when they are 6 weeks old and can have many babies at one time - up to 20! It is usually not easy to find good new homes for all the hamster babies. It is not a good



idea to breed your pets. Hamster mothers may eat their young if the babies are sickly or if she is disturbed. It is also important not to touch the babies as this changes the scent on them.



What my pet hamster needs

- a cage
- food & water
- a water bottle
- a wheel (one without any holes would be best)
- bedding (wood shavings for them to dig, sleep and play in)
- a little hamster house to hide in
- a food dish
- lots of love and time from me!

Hamsters live their entire lives in their cages so it is important to make it as interesting and as comfortable as possible. Newspaper, sawdust and sand are not good bedding. Wood shavings and aspen are best.

Hamsters
can live 2-4 years!

What are RABBITS?



Rabbits are plant-eating mammals or herbivores. They belong to a group of animals called the lagomorphs. Rabbits' teeth grow throughout their lives. Rabbits have a very good sense of smell and hearing. These senses help it find food and escape from predators. There are many different types of pet rabbits. They can have long or short fur and long or short ears. Some rabbits are as big as a medium sized dog while others are as small as a guinea pig.

What are rabbits like?

Rabbits wake up at dawn (the time when the sun rises) and dusk (the time when the sun sets). They clean themselves with their paws and saliva. Rabbits are curious animals but can be scared easily by loud noises or sudden movements. When scared, rabbits may kick or bite. Rabbits usually do not like to be picked up. They prefer to play on the ground. Most rabbits will be friendly if people have played with them from young. Rabbits need a patient and gentle owner. Rabbits also need to be alone sometimes to rest and play. As your rabbit's teeth keep on growing, she will need to chew on things to keep them trim.



What my rabbit needs

- a cage
- food & water
- a water bottle
- a food dish
- bedding
- toys
- litterbox
- grooming equipment for long fur (comb and brush)
- nail clippers
- lots of love and attention from me!



Rabbits usually live most of their lives in their cages so it is important to make it as interesting and as comfortable as possible.

Rabbits
can live up to
around 8 years!



Which type of rabbit should I get?

All types of rabbits have almost the same needs. Bigger rabbits will need more room and more food. Rabbits with long fur will need you to comb and brush their fur often. Different rabbits, just like people, have different personalities.



How many should I get?



Rabbits like to have company. It's best to get two female rabbits as two male rabbits will fight. One male and one female rabbit will have babies and that's not a good idea.

How do I hold a rabbit?

If you need to pick up your rabbit, remember to support her bottom as you pick her up or she will become very scared. Put one hand around her body and another one below her bottom. Hold her near your body. If she gets scared and starts to kick, put her down gently and let her calm down before trying again. Never pick up a rabbit by her ears! That would hurt her.



How do I look after my rabbit?



Keep your rabbit in a cool place. If your rabbit is too hot, she may fall ill. If your rabbit has a cage that does not have a flat, solid floor, give her an old rug or board to sit on. Wire floors are uncomfortable for rabbits and can damage their feet. You can litter train your rabbit so that she does not do her toilet everywhere. You will need to change her bedding or litter paper under her cage every day. If your rabbit is sick, bring her to the veterinary clinic where she can see the animal doctor, called a veterinarian. A veterinarian will be able to answer any questions you have on your rabbit's health. Rabbits clean their own fur so they do not need a bath unless they are very dirty. You can teach some rabbits to come when you call their name.



Should I breed my rabbit?

No! Rabbits can have many babies at one time - up to 10! It is usually not easy to find good new homes for all the baby rabbits. It is not a good idea to breed your pets because there are other rabbits already looking for good homes to go to. Neutering or spaying (also called sterilisation) is an operation done by the veterinarian that prevents your pet from having babies.

What do rabbits eat?

Rabbits are herbivores. This means they eat plant matter and do not eat meat. Rabbits need a balanced diet, just like the rest of us so you should not feed your rabbit only carrots or one type of food. Rabbits can be fed pellets that are especially made for rabbits. You can also feed her some fresh vegetables and fruits such as carrot, xiao pai chai or apple. Do not feed her too much vegetables or she might get a stomachache. Give your rabbit the chance to exercise so she won't get fat. Some rabbits eat too much because they are bored in their cages. Provide gnawing sticks or rabbit-safe toys for your rabbit. Rabbits need plenty of fresh, clean water every day.



What are BIRDS?



Birds are warm-blooded animals with feathers. Most birds can fly but some, like the ostrich and penguin, cannot. Birds have a good sense of sight. This helps them fly, look for food and escape from predators. Birds lay eggs instead of giving birth to live young. There are many different types of birds. Some are big but some are really tiny. Some popular pet birds include the budgerigar, canary, finch, parakeet, cockatiel and the Indian hill mynah. Not all birds make good pets. Some are too big and some can be rather noisy. Other birds are endangered with only small numbers left in the wild.

What are birds like?

Birds like to have company. Some birds can sing really beautifully but others make loud noises that can be irritating. Birds can be scared of people, including you. You will need to spend time with your bird to gain her trust. Some birds moult or change their feathers at certain times of the year. They may look very messy but they will soon grow a nice new set of feathers. Birds also groom themselves by using their beaks to run through their feathers. They also enjoy taking baths in shallow puddles. Birds are curious and some will play with simple toys like mirrors and balls. Some birds are also really smart and you can train them to do simple "tricks". You might know of a parrot that talks, but not every bird can talk. Parrots and mynahs learn to talk more easily than other types of birds.

How do I look after my bird?

You will need to clean your bird's cage every day. Disinfect the cage weekly. Feed your bird at about the same time every day, as they like to have a fixed timetable. Some birds will take off the hard outer parts of the seeds (called husks) and eat only the insides. You will have to throw away the empty husks in the feed bowl every day and replace it with fresh food. If the bowl looks full, check that there is food and not just empty husks.



Give your bird a shallow bowl of water for her to bathe in. It might be difficult to tell if your bird is sick by how it looks. Watch your pet carefully to see if she is eating properly. She might also not take a bath if she is sick. When she is sick (e.g. very quiet, not eating or all fluffed up) bring her to a veterinarian, an animal doctor. A veterinarian will be able to answer your questions on your bird's health.

Birds like things to remain the same in their home. They might be scared of strangers they've never seen before. You can talk to your bird to let it get used to you. You will need to be very patient with her. You can train some birds to sit or perch on your finger but you will have to do this step by step. Start by holding out food to her so that she gets used to your hand. Do not make sudden movements around your bird or you might scare her. You may have to trim your bird's claws if they grow too long. Have someone (preferably a veterinarian) show you how to do it.



What my bird needs

- an aviary (a cage for birds)
- food & water
- a food dish
- a water dish
- bird bath
- perches
- toys (mirrors, ladders and others)
- cuttlefish bone/calcium carbonate
- grit (for some birds)
- nail trimmer
- cage cover
- lots of love and time from me!



These birds can live a long time and can make a lot of noise

Some **Birds** live a few years but others can live 60 - 70 years!



Birds live their entire lives in their cages so it is important to make their homes as interesting and as comfortable as possible. Your pet should have enough space to stretch her wings and fly short distances.

What do birds eat?

The many different types of birds do not all eat the same thing. Find out exactly what your pet bird eats. You can do this by reading books on the type of bird you have or by asking people who know about birds.

Many birds are omnivores, which means they eat both plants and meat. Different seed mixtures and feed pellets are sold at pet stores. See whether there is one that suits your bird. If not, you will need to find out how to mix one for her.

Birds need a balanced diet, just like the rest of us so it isn't a good idea to feed her only one sort of food, even if she likes it very much. Birds also eat fresh foods like green vegetables, carrots and fruits. But do not feed your pet too much fresh vegetables/fruits or she might get diarrhoea.

Some birds also eat mealworms and crickets. Birds also need a piece of cuttlefish bone (this can be bought at pet stores), which provides them with calcium. Birds need fresh water every day. Some birds might also need to be given grit. This is something like sand and helps the bird digest its food.



Mixed seeds



Millet seeds



Mealworms

What are FISH?

Fish are cold-blooded animals that live in water and use fins to move around. They live in oceans, lakes, rivers and streams around the world. There are many different types of fish but not all of them are kept as pets. Fish, like the rest of us, need oxygen. They take in oxygen from the water they live in, using their gills. This is something that we cannot do. Very few fishes have lungs and lungfishes are usually not kept as pets. Fish cannot get the oxygen they need from the air, so do not ever take them out of water unless you really have to, like when you are cleaning their tank. Even then, you should not take them out for more than a few seconds.

What are fishes like?

Fish cannot play with you like a dog or cat can, but they are fun and interesting to watch. Some people also find it relaxing to see the fish move through the water. Many people add different types of plants to make the tank look prettier. Fish do not make any noise. They do not have eyelids so fish cannot close their eyes. They sleep with their eyes open. Some fish can even sleep while they are moving!



What kind of fish should I get?

The fish you decide to get should be one that you can look after properly. Some fish are really big and you might not have enough space for them. Some fish can get along with other fish but some prefer to stay on their own. Marine fishes (those

that live in saltwater) are usually more difficult and expensive to keep than freshwater fishes. Common freshwater aquarium fishes include tetras, corydoras, Siamese fighting fish, goldfish, guppies, swordtails and platies.

Marine fishes, such as the clownfish, are much harder to take care of than most freshwater fishes



This kind of bowl is pretty but is not a good home for fish

How do I look after my fish?

It is important to keep the water in your fish tank clean. You may need to change the water every week, depending on the type of fish and equipment you have.

Do not change all the water at one time. Leave at least half or more of the water in the tank. Scrub the sides of the tank to remove algae. A filter will help to keep your tank clean. There are many different types of filters. These are grouped as mechanical, chemical and biological filters. Some get rid of dirt while others remove chemicals or substances that might harm your fish.

The health of your fish depends on the water they live in. To make sure that the water contains the right amount of different chemicals, you need to do some tests on the water regularly. Common tests done are for pH, nitrates, ammonia and hardness of the water.

You can feed your fish once a day. Do not feed them too much or the extra food will dirty the water. Different types of fish will have different needs. Some need warm water and some need cool water. Fish that need cool water, like saltwater fishes, will need a refrigerator unit for their tank to keep the water cool.

Read up on your type of pet fish so you can take good care of it. Fish can also become sick. Although you can buy solutions for the tank water and get good advice about how to get your fish well again from some experienced fish owners, you should always remember that the veterinarian, an animal doctor, is there to treat your fish when it falls sick.



What my fish needs

- a tank
- air pump
- filtration system
- fish food
- lots of space to swim around
- hiding places
- cleaning equipment
- others (light, water heater, etc.)
- lots of attention from me!

Many owners also like to decorate their tanks with stones. Some people like to put in gravel, stones and water plants. These will give the fish a place to hide and rest.



What do fish eat?

Fish do not all eat the same thing. Most fish eat both plants and meat. You can buy prepared fish food from the petstore. Some of these can be small pellets or flakes. Look for the one made especially for your type of pet fish. Some fish need to be fed food such as bloodworms, tubifex worms or vegetables. Some of the food can be bought frozen or dried. Read up on your type of fish so you know what to feed them, especially if there is no ready-made food for them at the pet shop.



There are many types of fish that are popular as pets. While some have short lifespans, others can live a very long time.

Guppy: around 4 years
Goldfish: up to 15 years
Koi: over 40 years.

What are TERRAPINS?



Terrapins, tortoises and turtles are all reptiles. Other reptiles include lizards and snakes. Reptiles are cold-blooded animals with a scaly body. They cannot control the temperature of their body, like we can. They depend on their surroundings to warm up their bodies. Turtles and terrapins are good swimmers whilst tortoises live mostly on land. Most reptiles lay eggs just like birds. The only type of reptile allowed to be kept as a pet in Singapore is the red-eared slider, also called the common terrapin. This terrapin has two red stripes along the sides of its head and can grow to up to 30cm in length and live up to 20 years or more!

What are terrapins like?

Terrapins are not a cuddly pet that you can hug. Besides being rather cold and wet most of the time, they do not usually like to be touched or picked up. If just watching your pet is not enough for you, a terrapin may not be the pet for you. Terrapins are active in the



day and enjoy swimming and sunbathing. This means the tank should have enough water for your terrapin to swim around in and a rock or other place for her to sunbathe.

How do I look after my terrapin?

If you have more than one terrapin, it is important to give them enough space or else they might end up fighting and injuring each other. It is important to keep your terrapin's tank clean. Uneaten food can dirty the tank very fast and cause it to smell. Remove any food that your terrapin has not finished after each feeding and change the water everyday. If you do not want to clean the terrapin's tank too often you could feed her in a separate smaller tank or tub. You will then probably need to clean the main tank once every week. Each time you touch your terrapin wash your hands well afterwards. If your terrapin does not have a clean environment, she might get sick. If your terrapin is sick, you will need to bring her to see the veterinarian, or animal doctor. You can ask the veterinarian any questions you have about the health of your pet.



What does a terrapin eat?

Terrapins are omnivores, meaning that they eat both plants and meat. As terrapins grow older, they tend to prefer plants to meat. Prepared terrapin food is sold at pet shops but you should also feed him some fresh food, like meat, fish, small prawns and worms and vegetables such as lettuce and fruits. Make sure that the food you buy at the petshop is for terrapins and not turtles as they eat different things. Also, for a strong healthy shell, you should add some powdered cuttlefish bone or bonemeal to their main food. The type of food you feed your terrapin is very important. If you feed her the wrong type of food, she may become sick. She may also not be able to grow a nice strong shell. Do not feed your terrapin too much or she will become fat and this is unhealthy. Try to feed your terrapin at the same time every day.

What your terrapin needs

- a suitable tank (the tank should have a dry area for the terrapin to sun herself and dry off and a wet area with enough space and water depth for swimming)
- food dish
- filtration equipment (if you are change the water regularly)
- care & attention

Terrapins
can live for more than 20 years!

Something bad that happens to terrapins

Terrapins are really cute when they are small but did you know that they can grow up to be really big? The small ones that you normally see are very young. Many people let their terrapins go in nearby ponds or reservoirs when they grow big. However, terrapins are pets, not garbage! If you would like a terrapin, you need to take care of it even when it grows up big. Remember that as it grows big, it will need more space and more food.



Baby terrapins



big terrapins (30 centimetres in length!)



Pet Care Tips:

- Do not cut the nails (claws) of your pet too short or they will bleed. It's best to ask your vet to show you how to do this properly.
- Chocolates are not good for dogs. Don't feed chocolates to dogs.
- Never give cats Panadol. It could kill them.
- Keep hamsters separately to prevent fighting and breeding.
- Sterilised dogs, cats and rabbits make happier and healthier pets.
- Keep your terrapin tank clean and always wash you hands after you handle your terrapins or their tank. Terrapins could carry the Salmonella bacteria, which could give you diarrhoea.
- Be sure you have the resources and time to take care of a pet before you get one.
- Do not abandon your pet. If you have to give up your pet, please find another home for it. There are also boarding farms where you can board your pet for long term. As a last resort you may bring it to CAWC or SPCA.



Cut Here

Please be a responsible pet owner.



You can find out more about your pet and pet care by visiting our pet poster gallery and library. You can also come to watch a video on pet care and listen to a talk. If you would like to visit the centre, please contact our Animal Welfare Education Branch at **6471 9987**.



Bus services to CAWC

■ Buses: 10, 30, 51, 143, 188

Bus Stop: **B05**

Alight at Pasir Panjang Centre (from HarbourFront)

■ Buses: 10, 30, 51, 143, 176, 188

Bus Stop: **B06**

Alight at Harbourside Bldg (from West Coast/Pasir Panjang)