



FEEDING ENRICHMENT FOR SMALL MAMMALS

Is 'how' you feed as important as 'what' you feed?

Choosing the right food for your pet is an important element of pet care. However, not only what you feed but how you feed can have a significant impact on their well-being.

In the wild, small mammals would spend most of their time searching for, storing, and eating enough of their food which gives them the energy and nutrients that they need. You can encourage these natural behaviours in your pets by creating the right environment to help them stay active and stimulated by working for their food reward. While playing and exercise can help reduce boredom and stress in pets, feeding time is also a great opportunity for physical and mental activities and improving your pet's quality of life.

GENERAL BENEFITS OF FEEDING ENRICHMENT FOR SMALL MAMMALS

- Prolonging the feeding time which reduces boredom.
- Creating stimulating challenges to make them work and achieve rewards.
- Encouraging natural behaviour such as foraging, digging and stretching.
- May help prevent obesity by keeping pets active.
- Dental health benefits by helping to wear down teeth (for those pets with constantly growing teeth).
- Useful for training purposes and bonding between owner and pet.

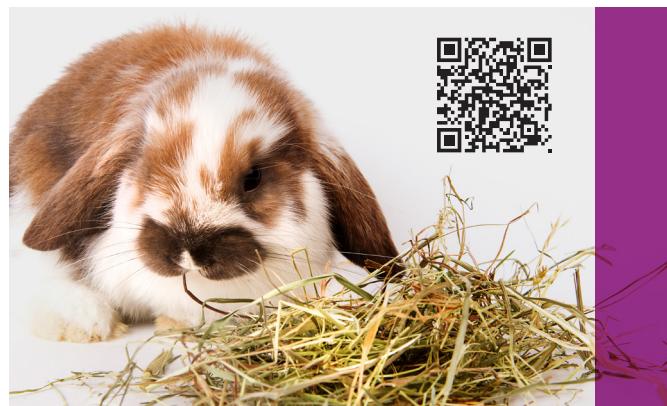


RABBITS AND GUINEA PIGS

Herbivorous small mammals such as rabbits and guinea pigs enjoy foraging. So, putting their food in different locations will allow them to express this natural behaviour and will prolong their feeding time, keeping them active for longer.



You could place some of their food in hanging positions to make them stand on their hind legs and stretch their muscles to reach the food. Also try stuffing a cardboard tube with hay, herbs, or suitable vegetables for your pets to get the food out of.



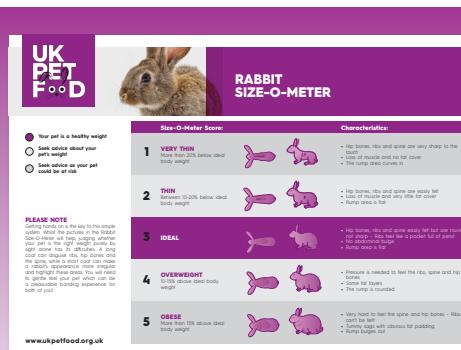
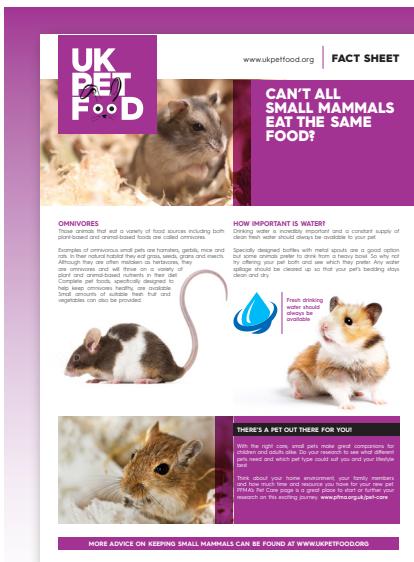
The majority of the diet of **Rabbits** and **Guinea pigs** should consist of **good quality hay or grass**. Click on the QR Code opposite to view our posters online on this topic.

HAMSTERS, GERBILS, MICE & RATS

Try using more than one location at a time to place their food. You can also hide some of their food, or treats like suitable vegetables, inside paper bags or cardboard boxes for them to shred and discover their rewards!



In the wild these animals dig burrows, which are a series of tunnels, to live, breed, and store their food. To encourage these natural digging and storing behaviours, you can provide ready-made tunnels, or let them make their own. Blocks of wood can be drilled to make tunnels, which the animals may enlarge themselves by their natural tendency to gnaw.



Learn more about small mammals!

Can't All Small Mammals Eat the Same Food? View our factsheets and body condition score charts for **Rabbits** and **Guinea Pigs** on our website. **Simply scan the QR Code opposite!**



FURTHER ADVICE AND INFORMATION ON PET HEALTH CAN BE FOUND AT WWW.UKPETFOOD.ORG