

# **The April Lodge Guide to Adoption and Care**

By

Val Savage

British Association of Rodentologists Guinea Pig Health Advisor

Tel 01304 619152

[www.aprillodge.co.uk/e-mail](http://www.aprillodge.co.uk/e-mail) [aprillodgeguinea@aol.com](mailto:aprillodgeguinea@aol.com)

Registered Charity Number 1121002

## **WHICH GUINEA PIG?**

Most of our residents have had a bad start in life, whether they have been neglected, abused, abandoned, dumped or just no longer wanted for whatever reason. One of our jobs is to protect the guinea pigs from the same fate happening again which is why this Adoption and Care Guide has been produced. When admitted to April Lodge, the guinea pigs are documented and we commence with regular health checks, copies of which are passed on to the new owner. When you make an appointment to see our animals, you need to remember that 'show material' is not what we are about. If that is important to you, maybe you should be seeing a breeder or a pet shop. We are looking for quality homes where our animals can live a stress-free, "happily ever after" life. In return, people that adopt our guinea pigs are held in the highest esteem. Adoption includes returning at regular intervals for nail clipping, routine worming, mange prevention, etc unless you are able to make your own healthcare arrangements. This is a FREE service for all April Lodge ex-rescue guinea pigs for the rest of their lives. For other guinea pigs it is by small donation to the charity.

## **BEFORE ADOPTION**

Note – If anyone in your family has asthma or an allergy, please give careful consideration to adopting a guinea pig.

After reading our care section, if you still wish to go ahead with an adoption you need to make an appointment for a home visit. This is to make sure that the proposed new home is suitable and to discuss any concerns you may have. The home visitor is there to promote adoption but she will expect to talk to the main carer who has to be over 18 years of age, see secure and protected, substantial accommodation and run and will assume the applicant has read through the Guide to Adoption and Care prior to the visit. Please make sure you have everything prepared prior to the home visit. It is not adequate to say what you are going to do and the visit will be a waste of time.

## **ACCOMMODATION AND ACCESSORIES**

You will need a substantial hutch/indoor cage. The hutch should be at least 3ft 6ins/3.3mtrs wide. It should be well off the ground and kept in a disused outbuilding/shed. If the hutch is kept outside in the summer, it needs to be well off the ground with locks, bolts and/or bungee leads to protect them from foxes. You will also need a rain cover. The hutch which would normally need cleaning every 2 to 3 days, must provide a water bottle which needs changing daily and be kept free of algae which harbours bacteria especially in the spout. A large ceramic dish for dry feed will prevent any spillage when your guinea pig insists on eating with his front feet on the rim and a large hayrack will provide an abundance of essential, clean hay.



[www.aprillodge.co.uk](http://www.aprillodge.co.uk) for more information on this subject. Guinea pigs do well on variety and colour although to date there is nothing to replace spring grass. This has every nutrient required. Ensure they are accustomed to it to avoid bloat (often fatal). Only give lettuce and spinach as a treat as both have adverse effects if given liberally. Please remember an ad-lib supply of hay will aid digestion and keep your guinea pigs teeth trimmed. Guinea pigs like to munch for about 16 hours per day for these very reasons. Please avoid dry feed which contains E.C. Permitted Chemical colourants as this can cause high blood glucose levels (amongst other problems) giving the guinea pig symptoms of diabetes. A blood test can give an off-the-scale blood sugar reading. Sadly, an insulin overload on these occasions would probably prove fatal.

### **How to Find out if Feed Contains Chemical Colourants**

If it contains E.C permitted colourants, it will be mentioned in the list of ingredients. Or it will be displayed as an "E" ingredient. Check occasionally that the company has not changed its supplier and that this chemical is not included.

### **COMPANIONS**

All guinea pigs should have company...they are a colony animal. Do not house your guinea pig with a rabbit or any other species. A rabbit has different dietary requirements. They can kick out, often in exuberance, putting the guinea pig at risk from injury. Females often bite their guinea pig companions when in season, putting the guinea pig at risk from injury, either sex can bother your guinea pig by trying to mate it and rabbits can pass on a fur mite. We have a section on companions on our web-site - [www.aprillodge.co.uk](http://www.aprillodge.co.uk)

Thank you for your time on this matter and we hope to hear from you soon!

Enquiries : [aprillodgeguinea@aol.com](mailto:aprillodgeguinea@aol.com) or Tel 01304 619152

We also supply hutches, runs, dishes, bottles, hay, hayracks, bedding, dry feed, shampoo, cleaning sprays, cosy beds, carrying boxes etc. boarding & clinic. Our shop is open on SEVEN DAYS A WEEK FROM 10AM-12 NOON. All proceeds go direct into the charity. Transactions can be made by cash, cheque, or debit/credit card.

Adoption fees are:-

- 1 Guinea Pig = £15 (male or female)
- 1 Pair of male Guinea Pigs = £30
- 1 Pair of female Guinea Pigs = £30
- 1 Castrated Male Guinea Pig who is part of a pair, the other being female = £25
- 1 Castrated Male Guinea Pig paired with a Female Guinea Pig = £40
- 1 Castrated Male Guinea Pig to go as companion to female = £40

\*\*\*\*\*  
ALL PROCEEDS FROM OUR SHOP, BOARDING AND ADOPTION FEES HELP  
TO FUND OUR REGISTERED CHARITY APRIL LODGE GUINEA PIG RESCUE

6 Johns Green, Sandwich, Kent CT13 ODE  
Tel 01304 619152/[www.aprillodge.co.uk](http://www.aprillodge.co.uk)

