

## Finding your new companions

### Step 1: Submit your application form (available on our website) and photos

We will need to see photos and measurements of your degus' accommodation. If you are looking to adopt a companion for your existing male degu/s, please also send proof of neutering. Please email these documents to: [smallanimals1@raystede.org](mailto:smallanimals1@raystede.org)

We will consider your application and contact you if we need a few more details or to invite you to Raystede for a chat. If you do not hear from us, we have everything we need for now, thank you.

### Step 2: Wait for the magic to happen

Once you have registered with us, please keep an eye on our website for new arrivals and contact us if you feel someone might suit your home.

When animals arrive at Raystede, we get to know them through behaviour and medical assessments. Our expert animal care teams carefully use this information alongside your application to see if the match could be a success. Finding the perfect pet can take time. Please be patient; they will be worth the wait.

### Step 3: Visit Raystede

We will invite you to Raystede as soon as we have found any potential matches for your home. We will discuss the animals' background, health and behaviour. This sometimes requires a few visits. You will need to provide photo ID, proof of address, and if applicable, written landlord permission to have a pet in your property.

### Step 4: Take your new pet home

Once we have found your perfect partner, we will book an adoption appointment; our Rehoming Team will talk you through caring for your pet. Your adoption fee will help us continue our work to give animals a better life.

## Rehoming criteria

Our housing requirements aim to ensure the best welfare standards for degus. Our team are happy to offer advice in purchasing or adapting your set-up to provide the best home before adopting.

### Degus are always rehomed in pairs, single sex groups, or a neutered male with one or multiple females.

Degus are social animals and naturally live in groups. We only rehome single degus as a companion for an existing degu – Raystede provide a bonding service which we can discuss. Males must be neutered before rehoming.

### Degus need a cage of at least 152 x 90 x 60cm / 5 x 3 x 2 ft

The cage should include shelves, a dust bath and plenty of things to explore and climb on. It should not have a wire floor or shelves. The bottom should be solid and lined with newspaper or a thin layer of bedding.

## Peace of mind when adopting

- All degus are health checked by a vet
- Male degus are neutered

You will also receive:

- A comprehensive adoption pack and appointment with our Rehoming Team to ensure you have everything you need to care for your new degus

Follow-up advice from our expert Small Animals Team

## Thank you for your adoption fee, which will help to cover some of our costs:

- Adoption fee: £10 each
- Bonding fee, if applicable: £20

The average daily cost of care for all small animals at Raystede is in excess of £300.

## Degu care

Owning and caring for degus is great fun and very rewarding, but it is a big responsibility and a long - term commitment. Did you know degus can live on average 5 – 8 years?

Getting your degus' diet and environment correct is the best way of ensuring a long and healthy life. Here are some guidelines for offering your degus the best care:

- **Degus are very social animals**, living in large colonies in the wild. They should always live in same sex groups or a neutered male with 1 or more females. They will become very withdrawn when split from their group or companion so always keep the groups together if transporting to the vets, for example.
- **They are extremely vocal** with sounds ranging from a soft, happy warble to a loud squeak which can be repeated for quite some time when angry or frightened.
- **Degus are diurnal** meaning they are awake and active during the daytime.
- **Males are larger than females.** Degus tend to measure 25 – 31cm (including tail) and weigh 170 -300g.
- **Degus are extremely inquisitive, busy creatures.** The cage should include plenty of things to climb on, such as branches (willow or apple wood), wooden shelves and rope. Other enrichment could include tubes, rocks, wooden blocks and terracotta pots.
- **Degus should not be housed in cages with wire flooring or shelves. Provide plenty of clean, warm bedding.** The bottom of the cage should be solid and lined with newspaper and a thin layer of bedding, such as hay, peat, paper substrate or natural paper pellet (cat litter). Wood shavings are not advisable as they give off aromatic oils which are harmful to degus.
- **A dust bath** (chinchilla dust / sand) should be provided permanently to ensure their coat stays clean and free from grease. The dust should be sieved daily as degus often use their dust baths as toilets.
- **The whole cage should be cleaned out at least twice a week.**
- **Check your degus for signs of injury or illness every day and seek veterinary advice if necessary.**
  - Check teeth are not becoming overgrown. The teeth are naturally yellow in colour. This is because an oral enzyme found in their saliva stains a young degu's tooth enamel as the tooth forms. The dark orange colouration is a sign of good health.
  - Check coat and skin for signs of mites, bald patches, sores or lumps.

## Diet

- **Degus are unable to digest sugar.** Feeding sugary foods can cause serious health problems such as diabetes and cataracts. Never feed raisins, peanuts or other sugary treats.
- **Complimentary feeds:** This should be in pellet form with balanced nutrients, rather than a muesli mix, to prevent selective feeding.
- **Fresh water** available at all times. This should be in a bowl to encourage natural drinking.
- **Additional feeds, in moderation:** low sugar treats such as washed dandelion leaves, grass, broccoli, herbs. They should be fed only once or twice a week, and in small pieces, about the size of a thumbnail.