

HAMSTER ADOPTION GUIDE



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 hamster's accommodation. Please email these to: 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 hamsters. Our team are happy to offer advice in purchasing or adapting your set-up to provide the best home before adopting.

Syrian/Chinese hamsters are rehomed individually. Russian hamsters are rehomed in pairs

We rehome each breed depending on their natural sociability. Pairs of hamsters must be same sex.

Hamsters need a cage of at least 32 x 20 x 20" / 80 x 50 x 50cm

Many enclosures sold for hamsters are far too small, so please check with us first to ensure you purchase one that is the correct size. Hamsters will always live happily in a cage that is too big, never in one that is too small.

The accommodation must enable the hamster/s to make the most of their environment as they are active creatures. They need to have plenty of enrichment such as shelves, branches, tubes and toys. If providing a wheel, ensure it is large enough to ensure the hamster's spine is not bent when in use.

Peace of mind when adopting

- All hamsters are health checked by a vet

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 hamster/s

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: £5 each

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

Raystede Centre for Animal Welfare, The Broyle, Ringmer, East Sussex, BN8 5AJ.

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Hamster care

Owning and caring for a hamster is great fun and very rewarding, but it is a big responsibility and a long-term commitment. Did you know hamsters can live on average 2 – 3 years?

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

- **All hamsters are nocturnal creatures** and therefore sleep during the day and become very active at night. For this reason, **a hamster is not usually the best pet for younger children**. They do not like being disturbed when they are sleeping and will become agitated and stressed if forced to wake up.
- **Syrian hamsters are by nature solitary creatures** and should live separately from one another.
- **Russian hamsters are more social** and can live in same sex groups.
- **Hamsters require regular exercise to keep healthy** and should be let out of their cages for exercise. It can be fun to create an obstacle course in a safe room using cardboard tubes and boxes with holes in. You will need to supervise your hamster when they are out as they may chew furniture or carpets. Never use "hamster balls" for exercise, these are very stressful for hamsters to be inside of.
- **Handling hamsters:**
 1. Never wake a sleeping hamster as this makes them unsociable.
 2. Before handling, slowly rub your hand in the bedding to collect their scent.
 3. Handle your hamster very carefully. During handling, any hamster can become stressed and will bite. Always cup your hamster very carefully, never squeeze. Always hold them close to your body.
 4. Be patient as hamsters move fast and are prone to jumping. A fall may cause serious injury.
- **Check your hamster for signs of injury or illness every day and seek veterinary advice if necessary.**
 - Check teeth are not becoming overgrown.
 - Check coat and skin for signs of mites, bald patches, sores or lumps.
 - Wet tail is an infectious disease of the bowel which can be fatal. It can be associated with stress such as a change of diet or environment. Symptoms are wet fur around tail caused by diarrhoea, listlessness, unwillingness to eat or poor coat condition. Seek veterinary advice immediately.
 - Cheek pouches can become impacted. A vet will have to remove the offending item.
- **Provide plenty of clean, soft paper / teabag substrate as bedding.** Avoid wood shavings and hay; chemicals in wood shavings can cause respiratory issues and hay can cause damage to cheek pouches.
- **Hamsters like to make a nest for sleeping in and to store food.** Special types of small animal bedding such as shredded paper should be used but avoid synthetic fibres such as cotton wool.

Diet

- **The bulk of a hamster' diet is a specially formulated mix** containing mixed seeds, grains, nuts and sometimes dried meat products and vitamins.
- **Fresh water** available at all times.
- **Fresh foods, in moderation:** Apples, pears, grapes and banana, raisins, tomatoes, carrots, sweetcorn, and clean dandelion leaves. Hard boiling egg, cooked fish or meat. Remove food the next day if not eaten.
- **Treats:** If treats are given avoid commercial treats which are high in sugars.