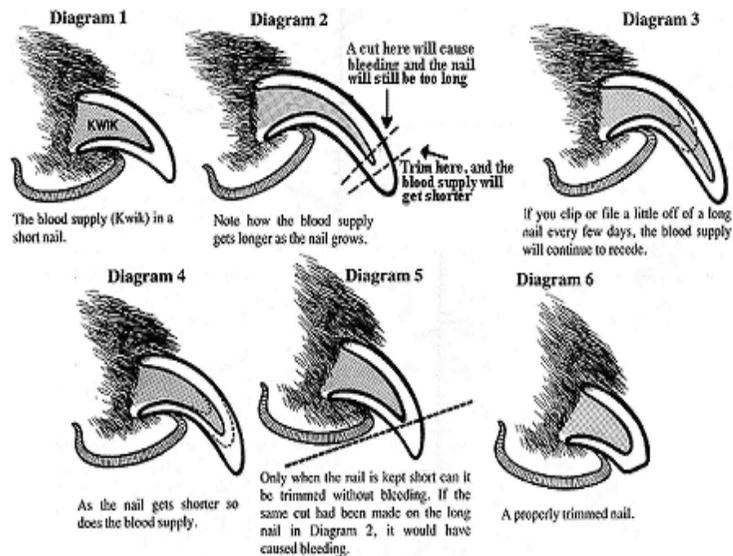


Chapter 7. General Health and Cavy Facts.

- Cavies teeth should be checked regularly for breaks and over-growth. See your vet or local breeder.
- Cavies need treatment for internal and external parasites on a regular basis see your vet, pet shop or local breeder.
- Cavies naturally scurry from danger and will be more timid when strangers are present.
- Adult males are solitary animals and therefore make excellent pets. If you require more than 1 pet a group or pair of sows can exist harmoniously . As will a pair of young males without sows to fight over. Having mixed genders will add to a surplus of unwanted cavies.
- Cavies toe nails need trimming when necessary refer to chart below. See a local breeder for help.



Basic Cavy Care



Produced by the Southern Cavy
Club of SA Inc'

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Contents

1. Introduction
2. Breeds
3. Housing
4. Hot Weather Care
5. Feeding and Nutrition
6. Buying your first Guinea Pig
7. General Health
8. Cavy Facts

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Chapter 5. Feeding and Nutrition

Fortunately there are many commercially prepared feed mixes available these days which should be available in a dish, that will not be tipped over, at all times. See advertising in centre of this booklet for club recommended nutritionally prepared diets. A good quality hay must also be available to aid digestion and dentition. Fresh, clean, cool water should also be available at all times. Your cavy being unable to store vitamin C should have a selection of fresh vegies or new cut grass daily to avoid deficiency. See below.

ALL GRASSES	PARSNIPS	CELLERY
WIRE WEED	CARROTS	BANANA
DANDELIONS	BEETROOT	ALL MELONS
LUCERNE (DRIED OR FRESH)	CUCUMBER	GRAPES
CORN	TOMATO	STONE FRUIT
PARSLEY	PUMPKIN	ENDIVE
CABBAGE	MARROW	CAPSICUM
	BEANS	CAULIFLOWER

Do not feed garden weeds as many are toxic.

Chapter 6. Buying your first Cavy

Now you've set up your cage or hutch in a suitable place you're ready to buy your first cavy whether pet or pedigree, a healthy animal will be available from a registered breeder or reputable pet shop. Our club members whom are registered breeders are here to help. The breeder will show you how to tell the gender of your cavy, be sure not to mix the sexes as litters will result and add to a surplus of unwanted pets.

Chapter 4. Hot Weather

Cavies do not sweat and are therefore susceptible to heat stress, South Australia has very warm summers and your animals need to be sheltered. Most people keep their cages and hutches under cover in a cool shed or in part of the house under air conditioning. If you cannot bring your animals inside, dripper hoses, sprinklers or wet bed sheets can be used to cool but don't wet the whole cage or hutch. Many people add frozen bottles of water or freezer bricks to their animals cages, you guinea pigs will instinctively lay or sit on or against these and/or lick the condensation of them to cool down. To avoid heat stress keep cavies below 30° C.

Heat Stress Symptoms are laying flat on side or belly, rapid shallow breathing (panting), glazed eyes, wet under chin and whole body seems to have gone soft and floppy. Take the animal to a cool, room such as a bathroom, be sure to support the head, place under cool running tap. **Do not use cold or refrigerated water as this may cause death by shock.** Keep the tap running gently over the entire body of the animal to slowly cool it. Avoid water rushing onto the face to prevent water in lungs and drowning. Feed watery vegies such as melons, a little lettuce, cucumber and celery, for a couple of days then resume normal diet. Keep the affected animal indoors for the remainder of the heat wave.

Most cavies make a full recovery from heat stress but some which have been exposed to too high a temperature for too long a duration may not pull through. Animals overweight or pregnant will be more likely to succumb to heat stress so a little planning will be necessary before summer.

Chapter 1. Introduction

The humble Guinea Pig, proper name *Cavia Porcellus* originated in Peru and since venturing to Europe on sailing ships has been a pet, companion, laboratory research animal and later a stud show exhibit for centuries. Because the length of our relationship with this affectionate small grazing animal pre dating records we can't be sure when or why it was nicknamed the guinea pig.

Earliest imports to Australia are uncertain but we do know that fanciers began recording pedigrees and holding exhibitions in the 1960's and that in the 1980's and early 1990's pedigree animals were imported from New Zealand and the UK to improve the characteristics of Australian exhibition cavies.

Chapter 2. Cavy Breeds

There are many cavy breeds to be admired, we have listed as many as space here permits and they are listed and described as follows:

The Self cavy has a short glossy coat of only one solid colour without any rosettes, coat movements or long hair.

The Crested cavy has one rosette on its forehead, with short glossy coat and comes in all breeds.

The Satin cavy is noticeable at first glance for the high sheen and ultra sleek coat, they can be crested, self or marked.

Cavy Breeds continued

The Marked breeds are many and varied. These are white patches on colour carefully bred to produce set patterns or roaning. Then there is the Himalayan with distinctive markings like the Siamese cat.

Coarse Coat breeds are the Rex with short fuzzy coat and Abyssinian has rosettes all over it's body.

The Ticked breeds are striking with an under colour and a second colour on the tips of the hair shafts they come in a wide range of colour combinations.

The long hairs are generally not for the beginner, these are a sight to behold with long tresses laying out around the animal and there are six long hair breeds each with it's own breed characteristics. To preserve the coat these are kept in wrappers and groomed daily which is a lot of work.



Chapter 3. Housing.

Pet shops, fodder stores and cheap shops offer purpose built cages and hutches at reasonable prices in varying colours and styles to suit. Alternatively you will see shelving units made into cages in breeders set ups. Cavy cages cannot have wire floors like those made for rabbits because they damage cavies bare padded feet. Your cavy does not need to be caged on grass, indoor raised cages/hutches with deep litter are easier to clean and make it easier to catch and handle a timid animal. Cages or hutches need to be secure enough to prevent a persistent dog or unsupervised small child from gaining entry, as cavies have small fragile bodies. Your hutch or cage should be kept in a cool well ventilated area out of full sun especially in Summer see chapter 4. As a rule your cage or hutch should not be less than 60cm squared per animal housed. Your cavy should never be housed with rabbits, mice or rats.

