

# Pocket Pets: Gerbils



# What are they?

- Warm-blooded mammal in the rodent family.
- Diurnal – meaning they are active during the day and sleep at night
- Naturally friendly, curious and very sociable.

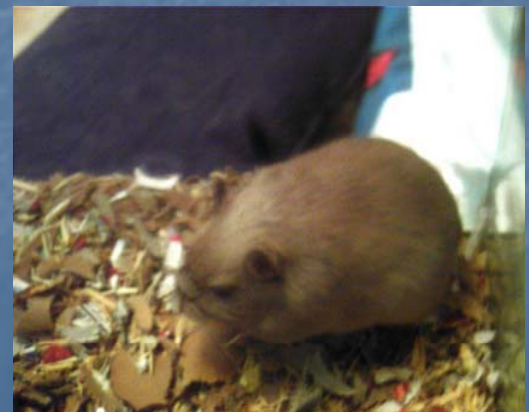
# Temperament

- Love to be handled.
- Happy gerbils often “sing” making noises like small birds chirping.
- Like to have a buddy rather than be alone.
- They choose one mate for life.



# Size and Life Expectancy

- Halfway between a rat and a mouse!
- About 2-4 oz.
- Can live from 1-5 years!
- Originated in Mongolia.



# Housing

- Glass fish aquarium.
- Wire-mesh cages.
- Plastic habitat.



# Bedding Materials

- LOVE digging as well as a soft place to sleep!
- For sleep, digging and to catch urine.
- Use aspen, corn cob or Carefresh bedding.
- DO NOT use Pine or Cedar Wood Shavings.
- Plain paper with no writing on it.
- Fill tank or cage 1/3 full with bedding.



# Food

- Use a good premixed gerbil food which has the right mix of protein, minerals, vitamins and bulk.
- Place either directly in bedding to allow foraging or in small ceramic bowls.
- Use Cheerios or Rice Krispies for treats!

# Water

- Each tank needs its own water bottle.



- Put tip of bottle **ABOVE** bedding!
- Check bottle every day to make sure it's not empty and operating properly.

# Toys and Exercise

- Gerbils are very active and need entertainment!
- Drill large holes through a 4" X 4".
- Toilet paper rolls, cardboard.
- Wheels, wheels, wheels!

# Grooming

- Can do it all by themselves!
- Not only cleans them but helps socialize.
- Dominate gerbil cleans submissive gerbil.
- Chew things to file their teeth down.



# Other Areas to Study

- Health Problems
- Identification of breeds
- Breeding and gestation
- Animal rights and rescue work



# Resources

- [www.agsgerbils.org/Gerbil\\_Care\\_Handbook/care.php](http://www.agsgerbils.org/Gerbil_Care_Handbook/care.php)
- [www.dogbreedinfo.com/pets/gerbil.htm](http://www.dogbreedinfo.com/pets/gerbil.htm)