

Pocket Pets: Gerbils



Health Concerns

■ Teeth

Misalignment of incisors due to injury or malnutrition may result in overgrowth, which can cause injury to the roof of the mouth.

■ Trauma

Common injuries are caused by gerbils being dropped or falling, usually while inside of an "exercise ball".

Health Concerns

- Epilepsy

Between 20 percent and 50 percent of all pet gerbils have the seizure disorder [epilepsy](#).^[7] The seizures are caused by fright, handling, or a new environment.

- Tumors

Both benign and malignant, are fairly common in pet gerbils, and are most common in females over the age of 2. Usually, the tumors involve the ovaries, causing an extended abdomen, or the skin cancer.

Health Concerns

- Tail sloughing

Gerbils can lose their tails due to improper handling, being attacked by another animal, or getting their tail stuck.

- Tyzzer's disease

The most common infectious disease in gerbils is [Tyzzer's Disease](#), which is often caused by either stress or bacteria. It quickly spreads between gerbils in close contact.

Health Concerns

- Respiratory problems

Forgetting to clean a pet gerbil's cage for weeks can be a problem. Ammonia will build up, and gerbils may have trouble breathing.

- Neglect

A common problem for all small rodents is neglect, which can cause the gerbils to not receive adequate food and water.

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
- www.dogbreedinfo.com/pets/gerbil.htm