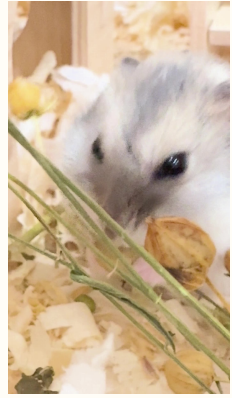


A kind start for a tiny friend.

A printable checklist for grown-ups.

Get the essentials ready before bringing a hamster home.



☐ A roomy, secure home

Aim for an enclosure with at least 100 × 50 cm of unbroken floor space. Larger is better. Use a solid floor, good ventilation and a secure lid.

☐ Space to burrow

Provide a deep area of suitable, low-dust bedding, at least 20 cm deep where possible. Add soft paper nesting material. Avoid fluffy cotton nesting wool.

☐ A wheel that fits

Choose a solid running surface. Your hamster should run with a straight back. Avoid wire or mesh wheels and enclosed exercise balls.

☐ Places to hide and explore

Add sheltered hides, safe tunnels, suitable chew items and stable supports. Keep heavy items from collapsing onto burrows. Check toys for sharp edges and trapping gaps.

☐ Food, fresh water and a quiet spot

Use a suitable hamster food as the main diet and provide clean water every day. Keep the enclosure away from direct sun, draughts, loud noise and other pets.

☐ An adult care plan

Agree who checks food, water and welfare every day. Find a vet who treats small mammals. Prepare a secure carrier and a care plan for holidays.

One hamster, one home is our household rule. Ask a knowledgeable rescue or vet about your hamster's individual needs.

Small checks. Every day.

Watch without disturbing sleep. Let your hamster wake naturally.

- ☐ **Water and food**
Replace water and check that the bottle or bowl works. Check the main food supply and remove uneaten fresh food before it spoils.
- ☐ **A quick welfare check**
Look for changes in movement, breathing, appetite, coat or droppings while your hamster is awake. Learn what is normal for your individual hamster.
- ☐ **A safe, comfortable home**
Check the lid, wheel and toys. Remove wet or soiled bedding as needed. Keep clean, familiar bedding and avoid unnecessary full clean-outs.
- ☐ **Gentle interaction**
Wash hands before and after contact. Let the hamster approach. Handle low over a safe surface, with an adult helping children. Never grab, squeeze or wake a sleeping hamster.

A change can need a vet quickly.

Breathing difficulty, collapse, an injury, not eating or diarrhoea need prompt veterinary advice. Do not wait for a website reply and do not give human medicines.

Read more and check current guidance

[Blue Cross: hamster care](#) · [RSPCA: a good home](#)
[RSPCA: hamster health](#) · [Potato's care guides](#)

Prepared 13 September 2026. General educational guidance for adults; not a veterinary diagnosis or a substitute for individual advice. The cited organisations have not endorsed this checklist. Free to print for personal and classroom use.