

The Midland Hamster Club

For more information about hamster care or to find out more about the Midland Hamster Club, please visit www.midlandhamsterclub.co.uk

What can I feed my hamster?



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Front Cover Photo: Grand Champion Olympus Silas, Courtesy of Olympus Hams

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When you're feeding your hamster you'll want to give them the best diet that you can that will keep them healthy throughout their lives so it is important that you not only give them the best quality foods that you can but also that you give them a varied diet.

Most pet shops will sell a choice of brands and most types of hamster foods for sale are a muesli based food and contain ingredients such as oats, corn, flaked peas and seeds. It is important not to pick any of the components such as corn or peas out of your hamsters mix as this will upset the nutritional balance. When you buy a new hamster, it's always worth asking what foods they have been fed on as although hamsters like a variety of foods, too much change at once can give them an upset stomach.

Hamsters enjoy a variety of fresh fruit and vegetables and these can be given in moderation to your pet. Popular choices include carrots, cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli, sprouts, broad beans, peas, runner beans, apple, bean sprouts, sweetcorn, cucumber and cooked potato. As hamsters are hoarders you will need to make sure that you remove any uneaten fresh foods, as these can go mouldy and cause illness. Hamsters can also enjoy dandelion leaves and grass but you will need to be especially careful where you pick these as they may be contaminated by road fumes or the urine of other animals. It is important to wash any fresh foods before giving them to your pet.

In the wild hamsters would normally eat a diet of seeds and insects and insects in particular would help to provide some of the protein that your hamster needs.

At home you can help give your hamster the protein it needs by giving them dried insects such as mealworms or crickets, a poultry based cat kibble, cooked chicken or turkey or some scrambled or boiled egg. When your hamster is young they may also appreciate milky foods to help them develop strong bones and teeth. Some hamsters prefer a little bit of milk on it's own, others may prefer a little bit of runny porridge or some bread soaked in milk.

It goes without saying that these treats should be unsweetened.

When choosing treats for your hamster, it is best to avoid giving them too many of the treats that are often sold for small pets as these are often high in sugars. Other treats that your hamster might enjoy include unsweetened cereals, nuts such as walnuts, brazil nuts and cashew nuts and dwarfs in particular enjoy small seeds such as linseeds, budgie seeds and enjoy stripping the seeds off of a piece of millet spray.

A hamster's teeth will continue to grow throughout their lives and they will need to be provided with things that they can gnaw on to keep these at the correct length. As well as shelled nuts, (shelled almonds should not be given) hamsters can be given dog biscuits (owners should ensure that these are as low in salt as possible) and dog chews such as Wimzees and Antos. Hamsters may also appreciate a piece of cuttlefish although these should be purchased from the pet shop as ones picked up at the beach may be contaminated with seawater.