

FREE SAMPLE

Hamster Care Package

The first 5 pages of the 37-page printable manual, free to keep.



In this sample: What's inside, How to Use This Package, Quick Profile, Cost Overview. The contents page shows every one of the 37 pages, so you can see exactly what the full package covers before you buy it.

Not in this sample: the 32 pages that follow, which are the full care guide, the health section, the quick reference cards, and the owner tools, checklists and logs.

The full package is \$8.99 at beastlyfacts.com/care-packages/hamster/. One purchase, and every corrected edition is a free re-download from your library. The free hamster care guide it was built from is at beastlyfacts.com/guides/hamster/, and stays free.

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What's inside

Every page is written to be used, not just read once.

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START HERE

How to use this package

Three ways to get value from it, depending on where you are right now.

If you haven't set up yet

Read pages 6 through 8 before buying anything, and read page 10 before choosing which hamster. The enclosure and the bedding are the two decisions that are expensive to redo, and the pet-shop starter kit gets both wrong: it is too small to hold the floor space, and too shallow to hold the bedding. Buy the enclosure once, from page 27, and buy it bigger than the kit.

If your hamster is already here

Go to the Setup Checklist on page 25 and audit what you have, starting with bedding depth, which is the single highest-value change available to you. If your hamster is chewing the bars, that is a husbandry readout rather than a personality trait and page 17 explains what changed it in the research. And if there is any wetness or matting around its rear end, stop reading and go to page 19: that is a same-day emergency.

Print these first

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|--|---|
| ☐ Page 25: Setup Checklist & Targets | ☐ Page 32: Pet-Sitter Sheet |
| ☐ Page 26: Emergency & Quick Targets Card | ☐ Page 33: Owner Log |
| ☐ Page 29: Symptom Quick Reference | ☐ Page 34: Equipment, Cleaning & Vet Log |
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WHY THIS PACKAGE EXISTS

A hamster is the cheapest animal in this series to buy and the one most often underfunded once it is home. Housing standards have moved a long way from the wire cage with a plastic tube, and the bedding depth research on page 17 is the clearest welfare finding for any small pet on this site. This package reflects current guidance, cross-checked against the veterinary and behavioral sources on page 36, not the back of a starter-kit box.

NOT A SUBSTITUTE FOR

An exotic or small-mammal vet. This matters more than the hamster's size suggests: a hamster's metabolism runs fast enough that conditions progress in hours rather than days, and wet tail can be fatal within 24 to 48 hours. Find a practice that sees rodents before you need one, and write the number on page 26 today.

SECTION 01

Quick profile

Everything at a glance before you read the detail.

Scientific name	<i>Mesocricetus auratus</i> for the Syrian. Dwarfs are <i>Phodopus</i> species, and the Chinese is <i>Cricetulus griseus</i>
Adult size	Syrian 5 to 7 in (13 to 18 cm) and 4 to 7 oz (115 to 200 g). Dwarfs roughly half that
Lifespan	Syrians 2 to 3 years, dwarfs 1.5 to 2.5. A large veterinary study found a median age at death of just 1.75 years
Native range	Northern Syria and southern Turkey, in arid steppe and farmland, living in extensive burrow systems
Diet type	Omnivore. A complete pellet or lab block as the staple, plus small fresh amounts and insect protein (page 11)
Floor space minimum	700 to 775 sq in (4,500 to 5,000 cm ²) unbroken for a Syrian, around 600 sq in (3,900 cm ²) for a dwarf
The one hard rule	Bedding deep enough to hold a real burrow. 6 in (15 cm) is the floor, the research used 40 cm (page 7)
Housing	One per enclosure. Syrians are strictly solitary and two together will fight (page 10)
Active hours	Nocturnal and crepuscular. Waking one during the day is the commonest way owners get bitten (page 15)
Legal status	Legal in 49 states and DC. Hawaii bans them outright, and a few states name only the Syrian (page 24)
Conservation status	Vulnerable (IUCN) for the wild Syrian hamster, despite how common the pet is

Fun facts worth knowing

- Nearly every pet Syrian is related. The species was brought into captivity from a single wild-caught female found near Aleppo in 1930, and almost every pet Syrian alive today descends from that one litter.
- Their cheek pouches hold about a fifth of their body weight. That is why you can go a day or two without seeing a hamster eat while it works quietly through a cached hoard, and why "hasn't eaten today" needs reading carefully (page 14).
- Bar-chewing is a measurement, not a habit. Wire-gnawing is one of the standard behavioral measures used to assess housing quality in small rodents, which is exactly why the bedding study on page 17 counted it.

SECTION 01

Cost overview

The cheapest animal in this series to buy, and the one whose setup costs most relative to the sticker price.

The hamster

\$15 to \$25 for a Syrian, \$8 to \$30 for a dwarf with Roborovski and Chinese at the higher end, and \$5 to \$15 from a rescue. There is no morph-driven pricing here the way there is with reptiles.

Every month

\$15 to \$50. Food is \$5 to \$12 of that; bedding and sand refills are the bigger recurring cost at \$15 to \$30, because deep bedding needs replacing to stay clean and dust free.

The setup

\$150 to \$350, with the enclosure the biggest line at \$30 to \$90 and bedding at \$20 to \$35 because you are buying a lot of it. Full breakdown on page 27.

The vet

A routine exam is \$40 to \$80. Emergency care, most urgently for wet tail, runs \$100 to \$800 depending on severity.

THE CHEAPEST ANIMAL, NOT THE CHEAPEST PET

This is the pattern worth remembering. A hamster costs less than a takeaway, and then demands a 700-plus square inch enclosure and six-plus inches of bedding that cost real money no matter how little the animal did. If the budget only stretches to the starter kit, the honest answer is to wait until it stretches further, because the enclosure is not the part you can economise on.

LIFESPAN CHANGES THE WHOLE CALCULATION

A large veterinary study tracking hamster deaths found a median age at death of **1.75 years**, with a range extending to about 3.65. Syrians tend toward the higher end at 2 to 3 years, dwarfs often shorter at 1.5 to 2.5. That is genuinely brief compared with almost any other pet, and it cuts both ways: less time to spread the setup cost across, but less lifetime expense overall, and a much shorter commitment to take on (page 23).

WHERE THE MONEY SHOULD GO

Enclosure first, bedding second, wheel third. Those three are the ones that decide whether the animal thrives, and they are also the three the starter kit gets wrong. Decor, tubes, and novelty items are the cheap part and the last part, in that order, and page 17 explains why the research puts them there.