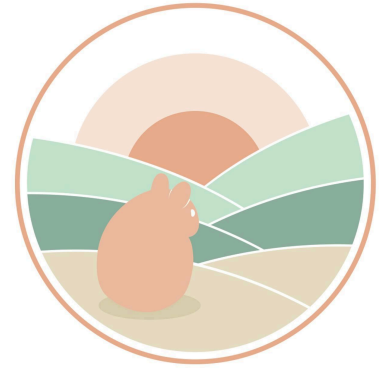


BRIGHT HORIZON HAMSTER RESCUE

CARE GUIDE

WEEKLY HEALTH CHECK GUIDE



Health checking your hamster weekly is essential. It detects problems early. You should weigh them, check their scent glands, skin, eyes, and teeth, listen to their breathing, and feel them for lumps and bumps. If anything appears out of the ordinary, seek advice from an exotic vet.

WEIGHT CHECK: Weigh your hamster weekly to keep track of their general health; digital scales work the best. The number of grams won't necessarily tell you if your hamster is overweight or underweight (because hamsters come in different shapes and sizes), but, along with size and shape, it can give an idea. A typical Syrian weighs 120-230g, Roborovski weighs 25-40g, Dwarfs weigh 40-60g, and Chinese weighs 30-45g. A sudden weight change likely indicates an issue, so contact an exotic vet immediately if you notice a significant unexplained difference from week to week.

BREATHING: If you hear wheezing, clicking or other loud noises, they may have a respiratory infection. Time is critical, so try to get an appointment with an exotic vet immediately, on the same day, ideally. Your hamster receiving antibiotics or other treatment as soon as possible will drastically increase their chance of survival.

TEETH & NAILS Their teeth should be yellow, not white, and an even length. Nails should not be curled over or lying sideways when standing. Long teeth/nails are a common issue in hamsters as they constantly grow, so they need items to chew to prevent them from growing too long. You can provide chews like Whimzees and rough surfaces like cork bark. Even with these **preventative** measures, you can't guarantee that their teeth or nails won't become too long. An exotic vet must correct overgrown teeth (do not attempt yourself), as overgrowth teeth can lead to further health complications. Check out our infographic on nail clipping for overgrown nails, which you **can** clip at home.

SKIN: Skin should be pink but not irritated or inflamed. Sometimes, if a hamster has a significant mite infestation, you can see the mites on their skin. An exotic vet can treat a hamster with irritated skin or suspected mites.

EYES: Eyes should look glassy and reflective. They should not produce pus, although older hamsters may have slightly closed eyes when waking up. If this is not usual, they may have an infection. Seek advice from an exotic vet immediately.

LUMPS & BUMPS: Lumps should be checked by an exotic vet immediately. Be careful not to mistake testes for tumours on male hamsters (they can protrude when they are hot).

SCENT GLANDS: Scent glands are located on the side of the hips in Syrians and the belly in Dwarves/Chinese, which are much more prone to infection. They typically appear darker and without fur. If scent glands look infected (or there is a significant amount of fur loss around them), contact an exotic vet for treatment.