



13600 County Road 11 ~ Burnsville, Minnesota 55337 ~ USA  
Phone (952)432-9661  
After Hours call (952)953-3737  
[www.ValleyViewVet.com](http://www.ValleyViewVet.com)

## GUINEA PIG DIET

Cavies are one of the few non-primate species that are unable to produce their own Vitamin C and thus need supplementation in their diet. While many pellets contain supplemental vit. C, it quickly breaks down and usually is below optimum levels within 60 days following manufacture. This means that cavies must either be given Vitamin C supplementation every day.

Most G.P. pellets are made with alfalfa because it is a nice color green and tastes better. The trouble is that it is too high in calcium and with long term use can cause kidney problems and bone deformation. In the wild, cavies eat a diet of mostly grass with hardly any fruit or veggies and so the balance of their diet in captivity should be similar. Timothy hay has been found to be the best approximation of their normal diet. Pellets are great for rounding out the diet with vitamins and minerals.

**Thus, the best diet for your cavy is as follows:**

- 1) **Timothy Hay (not alfalfa): All he wants. Enough to swim in. Letting him graze outside is fine as long as you don't use Chemlawn or other herbicides.**
- 2) **A daily Vitamin C supplementation will be needed. This can be in the supplemental guinea pig pellets, as a water additive, Tang fed by hand, or a quarter cup of fresh parsley.**
- 3) **No more than 1/8 cup pellets per day. Pellets are great to balance the diet because they are fortified with vitamins but they are made with alfalfa which can damage kidneys if too much is eaten they also do not require as much chewing as is needed for dental health.**
- 4) **No more than 1-2 Tsp. veggies per day. Remember, starch and sugars can make them "burn too hot". No fruit at all.**
- 5) **Fresh water daily.**

In Addition, in recent years we've found that oils in pine and cedar can inhibit Vit. C absorption and that cedar can cause liver damage. In most cases the best litter to use is recycled paper or Timothy hay litter. They don't cover up the smell as much but they have fewer problems associated with them.

**If you have any questions, please call us,**