

Chinchilla



A-Z

Health & Sickness Bible

Chapters Include: Chinchilla Examination * Illness Prevention
Caring for a Sick Chinchilla
Geriatric Care * Veterinary Surgeries

... together with the most extensive sickness & prevention
guide on the market, covering over **100 illnesses**



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***NOTE:** On the yearly anniversary of this website, some proceeds from the sales of this e-book will be donated to Chinchilla Rescue Centres of the author's choice. Purchases will help this venture and contribute to the safety and wellbeing of chinchillas in need. A list will be compiled yearly (in the month of December) of the Rescue Centres the author has chosen to give to, together with feedback from the receiving party to confirm this commitment has been followed.*

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Contents

Contents	3
Preface	4
Acknowledgements	4
Introduction	5
Chinchilla Examination	6
Illness Prevention	10
Caring For A Sick Chinchilla	12
Medications	13
Vaccinations & Supplements	16
Nutrients (Minerals & Vitamins)	18
Geriatric Care	21
Transporting Your Chinchilla to the Vet	22
Veterinary Surgeries	23
Chinchilla First Aid Kit	24
Hand Feeding	25
Cooling Suggestions	26
Questions and Answers	27
Last Word	28
A-Z Health Bible	29
About the Author & An Essential Guide to Owing A Chinchilla	156
Photograph Copyright Owners	158
Bibliography	161
Index	162



Introduction



Chinchillas are generally hardy little animals but sometimes things go wrong and the chances of a quick recovery or survival depends on recognising the problem as soon as possible and obtaining medical treatment (in some cases).

As chinchillas are becoming more popular as pets, the author of this e-book has put together an up-to-date medical A-Z Health & Sickness Bible to accompany her

popular selling chinchilla book – An Essential Guide To Owing A Chinchilla (hardback ISBN 185279245-0).

An Essential Guide to Owing a Chinchilla is a great compliment to this e-book as it gives an overall guide to every aspect of chinchilla care from buying a chinchilla to breeding and genetics and also includes its own health guide covering over 60 different illnesses. The topics covered in An Essential Guide to Owing A Chinchilla can be found on page 156 of this e-book.

The comprehensive Chinchilla A-Z Health & Sickness Bible is solely dedicated to the various illnesses a chinchilla can acquire and all the health issues that surround these cute furry balls of fluff. The Chinchilla A-Z Health & Sickness Bible describes:

- the illness
- the symptoms
- the prevention
- the cure
- possible fatality chances
- and further suggested reading



...of a particular ailment. Used during the lifetime of your chinchilla, this e-book will firstly help you to prevent potential illnesses and diseases and also guide you in recognising some of the symptoms. The Chinchilla A-Z Health & Sickness Bible will become an irreplaceable basic reference guide for you to consult with before seeking medical attention.

It should be mentioned at this stage, none of the medical advice given in this e-book should be a replacement for proper medical attention! At the first signs of any illness a chinchilla should be taken to a qualified veterinary surgeon that specialises in more exotic pets and especially a vet who can check into a chinchilla's mouth without the need for an anaesthetic! (You will be surprised how few vets can actually do this).



Illness Prevention


In all cases it is best to try and prevent an illness rather than trying to cure it. Listed below are some things you should do to ensure the prevention of any ailments towards your chinchilla.

- Provide good quality hay, preferably alfalfa (the best hay you can buy for nutritional values will be from your veterinary surgery and not the pet shop). The side-to-side grinding motions whilst chewing the hay will help file those hard to reach back molars. 
- Provide fresh water daily and never offer tap water. If tap water is all that is available, boil the water and allow to cool for 20 minutes before offering it to a chinchilla.
- Regularly clean the bottle. Buy a new replacement drinking bottle every 1-2 months as bacteria can easily form in the narrow drinking nozzle that is hard to clean inside.
- Throw away old pellets daily and replace with a new supply. Ensure you buy the best quality pellets you can and stick with the same brand as a constant change can play havoc on your chinchilla's digestive tract (p.60). 
- Never offer a chinchilla any pellets other than for its own kind. Rabbit and guinea pig pellets should never be given as they have hormonal nutritional differences therefore, digesting the wrong brand will be detrimental to a chinchilla's development and overall health.



- Disinfect the cage regularly with a safe detergent for chinchillas and regularly Hoover up loose, shedded fur (p.127). Keeping your chinchilla's cage clean is paramount to your chinchilla's health, as a build up of fur, dust and bacteria will be detrimental to your chinchilla's respiratory system (p.123).
- Ensure you keep the chinchilla cage in a quiet room that is not used regularly in the daytime. A chinchilla that does not rest well will be a chinchilla that is stressed out (p.133) and prone to illnesses.
- Perform weekly examinations and weigh-ins on your chinchilla to help prevent an illness going unrecognised until it becomes too hard or late to cure.
- Ensure your chinchilla cannot fall (p.70) from a 'fair' height onto something hard. Their jawbone is very thin and fragile and can be easily fractured (p.98) if it comes into a

collision with something hard.

- Allow your chinchilla to run outside the cage on a nightly basis for a minimum of 1-2 hours per night. Ensure the area your chinchilla will be investigating is completely 'chinchilla proof' and safe so your pet cannot come to any harm or escape. 
- Use a probiotic supplementation such as Avipro Plus (p.17) daily to help keep your chinchilla's gut flora in line.
- Take your chinchilla for regular dentist check-ups (p.56) preferably every 3 months. As chinchilla's teeth continually grow the earlier the detection of a tooth issue (p.55) the more likely it is to be resolved without any harm to your pet (I cannot stress this point enough).
- Do not use air fresheners or any type of aerosol in the environment of your chinchilla or over time he/she can acquire respiratory diseases (p.123).
- Interact with your chinchilla every day as a lone chinchilla will look at you as its partner and will become bored and lethargic (p.100) if not occupied. Alternatively, if your chinchillas live in a pair, ensure there are enough hiding places in case an argument starts up and one needs to hide (get away) from the other.
- Check your chinchilla's cage and toys regularly for any new sharp protruding edges that can harm your pet (p.53).
- Read An Essential Guide to Owning A Chinchilla for further information on preventing any unnecessary illnesses/diseases.



A-Z Health and Sickness Bible

A

Abdominal Pain – ache in the stomach region or belly.

Cause – Making an actual diagnosis of the cause of abdominal pain can be difficult as many diseases can result in this symptom. The pain is often non-specific and can be caused by a variety of conditions. Sometimes the pain is directly related to a specific organ such as the bladder but usually, the pain originates in the digestive system. Cramping, food poisoning, antibiotics/medication (p.32), constipation (p.50), diarrhoea (p.59), bacterial infection (p.33), enteritis (p.65), vitamin A overdose (p.19), internal parasites (p.115) or worms (p.96), intestinal flora imbalance, GI stasis (p.85), poisoning (p.118), fur balls (p.77) or an unidentified illness can cause the pain. If your female is experiencing abdominal pain and there is a chance she is pregnant (p.120), this can be an early symptom of a miscarriage (p.107).

Symptoms – If your chinchilla is suffering from abdominal pain you will notice him/her stretching or sitting on his/her hind legs with its belly puffed out. Your chinchilla may also lie on its side but commonly vocal sounds (p.148) will be heard when the area is touched or pressed. Diarrhoea (p.59) or constipation (p.50) may also accompany abdominal pain as will a loss of interest in food.

Prevention – Always feed your chinchilla the correct food and avoid over feeding treats. Make sure your chinchilla has fresh water daily and administer Avipro Plus (p.17) to help keep your chinchilla's gut flora in balance, especially if your chinchilla is on any antibiotics (p.32), medication (p.13) or under stress (p.133).

Cure – The only cure for abdominal pain is to find the cause and eliminate it. Take your chinchilla to a vet for an examination for any underlying illnesses. Avipro Plus can also be added to the water to help allow the natural gut flora to re-establish itself.

Fatality Chance – LOW – HIGH

It is hard to predict the fatality chance of abdominal pain as it depends on what the actual cause is. If it is due to an underlying illness that does not get identified and corrected further deterioration will occur, which could be seriously detrimental to your chinchilla's health. If the pain is due to poor diet and husbandry but gets corrected, the condition will begin to clear up immediately and no further decline will be noticed.

Further Reading – Bloat (p.40), Coccidia (p.48), Colitis (p.50), Cryptosporidia (p.52), G I Tract (p.82), Giardia (p.84), Listeriosis (p.101), Urinary Tract Infection (p.145).

Abscesses – a tender, easily pressed lump generally surrounded by a coloured area from pink to deep red. The middle of an abscess is full of pus and infectious rubbish (debris). Abscesses can show up any place on a chinchilla's body.



Cause – Generally caused by inflammation (p.94) of the hair follicles, cuts and lacerations (p.53) to the skin or an area infected with bacteria (p.33). Germs get under the skin or into these areas and cause an inflammatory response as your chinchilla's body defences try to kill these germs. The middle of an abscess liquefies and contains dead cells, bacteria, and other fragments. This area begins to grow, creating tension under the skin, causing it to stretch and further inflammation occurs in the surrounding tissues. It is the pressure of the skin and inflammation to the area that causes the pain.

Symptoms – Generally an abscess becomes a painful, compact mass that is red, warm to touch and tender. As the abscess enlarges, it may "point" and come to a head so you can see the material inside before they automatically burst (rupture).

Prevention – Maintain a healthy and clean environment. Seek immediate medical attention for any puncture wounds especially if you think there may be some debris in the wound. Perform cage maintenance once a week to check for any sharp protruding objects and disinfect the cage regularly.

Cure – Unlike other infections (p.93), antibiotics alone may not cure an abscess, especially if the abscess has been left and has enlarged. In general an abscess must be opened and drained using a syringe in order for it to improve. Sometimes draining occurs on its own, but generally it must be opened and drained by a veterinary surgeon.

Fatality Chance – MEDIUM - HIGH.

Most abscesses will continue to get worse without care. The infection (p.93) will continue to spread to the tissues under the skin and even into the bloodstream. If the infection spreads into the deeper tissue, your chinchilla may develop a fever (p.74) and begin to feel seriously ill. If treated, the area of the abscess will completely heal and disappear and your chinchilla's health will return to normal.

Further Reading – Dental Abscess (p.54), Lumps (p.103), Swelling (p.137).

Aggressive Behaviour (to mate or owner)

– a type of behaviour that is intended to cause harm or pain.

Cause – If a chinchilla is behaving aggressively towards its owner, it generally means that it has not bonded with the owner or the owner is mishandling the chinchilla in some way. A chinchilla can become aggressive towards its mate if the introduction stages have not been followed properly (see An Essential Guide to Owning A Chinchilla) or sometimes a male chinchilla can become aggressive if there are new-born kits in the cage. A severe head injury (p.89) can change the personality of your chinchilla and any chinchillas who have been succumbed to a



A hole is apparent in Spike's ear after being attacked by another chinchilla.

major operation may become aggressive if you try to handle them whilst they are healing. Continual back-breeding (p.33) can make a female chinchilla become aggressive and continuing sleep disorders (p.131) can make a chinchilla's temperament (p.8) more volatile.

Prevention – Ensure you have fully bonded with your chinchilla before trying to handle him/her and make sure when handling your pet, you hold him/her in the correct manner (please refer to An Essential Guide to Owning A Chinchilla). Also ensure there are plenty of hiding places within the cage so chinchillas can hide if an argument starts up and make sure introductions of two unfamiliar chinchillas are done in the correct manner. It can sometimes take up to 2 months to introduce chinchillas properly, therefore this process



Index

A

- Abscess..... 13, 15, **29**, 32, 34, 40, 54, 60, 73, 74, 94, 103, 104, 129, 130, 137, 139, 141, 149.
- Abdominal Pain..... 19, **29**, 32, 34, 40, 46, 47, 49-52, 59, 65, 66, 82, 84, 88, 96, 107, 115, 118, 145, 150, 153.
- Acknowledgements..... **4**.
- Aggressive Behaviour..... **30**, 38, 40, 80, 97, 134.
- Allergic Reaction (*allergies*)..... 14, **31**, 35, 41, 47, 51, 60, 68, 73, 119, 123, 126, 129, 130, 133, 137, 149, 151, 154.
- Antibiotics..... 13, 15, 17, 29, 30, **32**, 34-36, 42, 44, 49, 50, 52, 55, 59, 60, 63, 65, 66, 69, 74, 82, 85, 86, 94, 95, 100, 102-104, 108, 109, 112, 114, 115, 117, 118, 123, 130, 133, 137, 145-147, 150, 154.
- Anus..... **6**, 15, 41, 51, 69, 82, 84, 87, 96, 122, 123.
- Arkvits..... **16**, 56, 153.
- Avipro Plus..... 11, 14, **17**, 27, 29, 32, 34, 40, 42, 47, 49-52, 59, 61, 65, 66, 69, 82, 84-87, 96, 102, 116, 118, 123, 124, 134, 135, 137, 147.

B

- Back Breeding..... **33**, 38, 45, 67, 83, 84, 121, 138, 146, 152.
- Bacterial Infection..... 13, 19, 29, 32, **33**, 34-36, 44, 54, 55, 59, 60, 65, 74, 89, 93-96, 99-101, 114, 117, 121, 123, 129, 145, 151.
- Bad Breath..... **34**, 35, 56, 58, 103.
- Balance Loss..... 12, **35**, 41, 42, 54, 58, 71, 76, 89, 90, 98, 135.
- Balanitis..... **35**, 36, 114, 146.
- Baytril..... **13**, 14, 118.
- Behaviour Problems..... 31, 33, **36**, 37-39, 46, 58, 78-80, 83, 97, 100, 101, 120.
- Bereavement..... **37**, 57, 97, 112, 119, 133, 150.
- Bibliography..... **161**.
- Birth Complications..... 33, **38**, 39, 45, 67, 72, 108, 121, 147.
- Biting..... 7, 24, 30, 36, **39**, 74, 75, 89, 96, 104, 108, 114, 115, 125, 130.
- Bloat (Bloating)..... 15, 20, 29, **40**, 41, 49, 50-52, 60, 65, 66, 83-85, 88, 96, 99, 100, 115, 122, 137, 155.
- Breathing Problems..... 12, **41**, 48-50, 64, 78, 92, 101, 112, 117, 118, 123, 124, 128, 133, 135, 147, 151, 152.
- Broken Bones..... 14, 21, 35, **41**, 42, 70, 71, 76, 98, 103, 104, 153.
- Broken Tail..... 35, **42**, 43.
- Broken Teeth..... 42, **43**, 44, 56, 57, 61, 70, 81, 143.
- Broken Whiskers..... **44**.
- Bumblefoot..... 7, **44**, 73, 74.

GO BACK TO www.chinchillachronicles.com



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