

## CHINCHILLA AND GUINEA PIG DISEASES

Chinchilla and guinea pig teeth grow continuously during their whole life. Coprophagy is part of their life but they do not produce cecotropes.

### DIGESTIVE

#### DIFFICULTY TO EAT

**Possible causes; Malocclusion:** Insufficient hay intake in the daily ration, vitamin C deficiency or trauma by chewing the cage wire and sometimes a result of dental infections.

**NOT EATING, LITTLE OR NO STOOL AND NOT MOVING MUCH Gastro-intestinal stasis** is the direct consequence when a guinea pig or a chinchilla stops eating. Bloating follows and other signs like teeth grinding and trouble breathing will follow.

**Possible causes:** Teeth problems, a diet poor in fibers, ingesting a foreign object and all others causes that can lead to stoppage of food intake

#### SOFT STOOL OR DIAHRREA, NOT EATING, DEHYDRATATION

**Possible causes:** Stress, an abrupt diet change, a contaminated diet, insufficient fibers in daily ration, excessive sugar ingestion, antibiotic treatment unbalancing intestinal flora, bacteria and parasites especially in young animals.

#### DIFFICULTY TO EVACUATE STOOL, CONSTIPATION, RUBBING REAREND ON THE FLOOR, STOOL CORK

**Possible causes:** Older pigs are more prone to stool corks. The cause is yet unknown, however, secretions of the sebaceous glands, infection of the inguinal glands with loose stools that stick to the anus are possible causes.

### RESPIRATORY

#### NASAL AND EYE DISCHARGE, DIFFICULTY BREATHING, SNEEZING, COUGHING, NOT EATING, WEIGHT LOSS

**Possible causes:** A bacterial pneumonia is the main cause of respiratory problems.

**Prevention:** Use of non-dusty cage bedding like recycled paper is ideal. Clean the cage often because urine emits ammonia that is very irritating for then lungs. Give a balanced diet.

### URINARY PROBLEM

**BLOOD IN URINE, DIFFICULTY URINATING and sometimes vague signs like** eating less or not eating, change in behaviour, round back.

**Possible causes:** Crystals of calcium carbonate and calcium oxalate in the bladder and urethra and urinary tract infections are the main causes of urinary problems guinea pigs and chinchillas.

**Prevention:** Avoid commercial food and alfalfa hay. Give unlimited quantity of timothy hay, a variety of vegetables and unlimited fresh water.

## REPRODUCTIVE

### **ABDOMINALE DISTENSION, VAGINAL DISCHARGE, ROUND BACK**

**Possible causes** are uterine tumors and uterine infection.

**Prevention:** Spaying females.

### **BILATERAL HAIR LOSS ON THE SIDES WITHOUT SKIN LESION**

**Possible cause** is ovarian cysts

**Prevention:** Spaying females

### **SWOLLEN TESTICULES, PENIS SECRETION, WEIGHT LOSS**

**Possible cause:** Reproductive system bacterial infection

**Prevention:** Neuter males.

## DERMATOLOGICAL

Naturally, most guinea pigs have little to no hair around and on the nose lips and around ears.

### **SCRATCHING, HAIR LOSS, SE GRATTE, SCABS ON THE BODY**

**Possible causes:** Parasites like mites (*Trixacarus caviae*, *Chirodiscoides Caviae*), lice, rarely demodex and sometimes ringworm

**SWOLLEN NECK LYMPHS:** the cause is generally a bacterial infection or some tumors like lymphoma.

### **INFECTED PADS AND PAWS, ULCERATED OR NOT (PODODEMATITIS)**

An inadequate hygiene is the cause of paw infection; prevention is done through a good strict hygiene.

### **HAIR LOSS WITHOUT INFLAMMATION OR SCRATCHING**

**Possible causes:** Hormonal like ovarian cysts, environmental like tearing of hair by boredom or a dietary deficiency.

**Prevention:** Spay female, enrich the guinea pig or chinchilla's life with various toys.

**TUMOR:** Tumors can be benign like trichofolliculoma or malign like lymphoma and liposarcoma.

## VITAMIN C DEFICIENCY

We can observe some or all signs in the **guinea pig**.

Hard, rough fur, not eating, difficulty to apprehend food, diarrhea, gastrointestinal stasis, teeth grinding, vocalisation because of pain, a wound healing abnormally and joint inflammation.

Guinea pigs do not have l-gulonolactone oxidase, an enzyme that synthesises vitamin C from glucose. As for the chinchilla, they do not have this problem but it is always preferable to supplement them if vegetable intake is insufficient in vitamin C.

### ***Food containing vitamin C***

Red vegetable and green pepper, broccoli, tomatoes, kiwi, orange, chicory leaves, spinach, parsley, kale and beets. Be careful also, some contain a lot of calcium and oxalates so you and to give them in very little quantity. There are also caplets that you can give orally or dilute in water.

## **NEUROLOGICAL**

### **TILTED HEAD, TURNING IN CIRCLES, TORTICOLLIS**

**Possible causes:** Internal otitis, polyps of the tympanic bulla.

### **CONVULSIONS, SEIZURES OR INTENSE AGITATION**

Scratching so intense it resembles seizures.

**Possible causes:** Skin mites, lice.

### **REAL CONVULSIONS, DROOLING, FALLING ON ITS SIDE, LOSS OF CONSCIENCE**

**Possible causes:** Encephalitis bacterial, lead or heavy metal poisoning, heat stroke, hypocalcaemia, renal or hepatic insufficiency.

## **OPHTHALMOLOGY**

### **WATERY EYES AND HAIR LOSS AROUND EYES: Chinchilla**

**The primary cause is** a dental problem at the maxillary molars and premolars.

### **EYE WHITE MORE VISIBLE THAN USUAL; PEA EYE OR FATTY EYE OR PROTUSION OF THE CONJUNCTIVAL SAC: Guinea pig**

The guinea pig does not feel any pain or discomfort. It is more an esthetical problem; however, if it bothers its vision, the veterinarian can remove it by laser.

### **MATTERY SECRETIONS AND EYE THAT STICKS**

**Possible causes:** Bacterial conjunctivitis, cornea ulcer, signs of dental problem like an abscess or a consequence of a respiratory problem

### **EXOPHTALMY, EYE BALL OUT OF ORBIT**

**Possible causes:** Abscess, tumor and hypertension.