



## RSPCA Hamster Care Advice

### RSPCA COMPANION ANIMALS PET CARE FACTSHEET



## HOUSING HAMSTERS IN GROUPS

### IF HOUSING YOUR HAMSTERS IN GROUPS ALWAYS TAKE GREAT CARE TO MAKE SURE THAT THE GROUPS ARE COMPATIBLE



- Syrian and Chinese hamsters in particular are not naturally sociable and are better kept on their own. If you intend to house either of these varieties together, introduce them when they are young, don't put more than two or three together, watch them very carefully, and don't leave them together overnight until you are sure they are settled.
- Some species of hamster, principally dwarf hamsters, can be housed in pairs or trios, as long as the groups are formed early in life and are stable and harmonious.
- Ideally group housed hamsters should be young litter mates to help reduce the risk of aggression.
- Additional group members should not be added at a later date.
- If possible, house the animals singly but adjacent to each other for a week or so before putting them together, and monitor them carefully when grouping them.
- Use a cage with lots of space and provide plenty of enrichment, such as wheels, toys, clean hay, shredded paper and pieces of tissue.
- Make sure that each hamster can hide away from the others if it wishes to by providing multiple shelters.
- Although dwarf hamsters are more sociable than other species of hamster, fighting can still occur. Fighting between cage mates is likely to happen during the night when hamsters are active. Always check your hamsters in the morning to make sure that one or other of them is not badly injured and needing veterinary attention.
- Always check your hamsters regularly to make sure that aggression between the group members is not becoming a problem.

*This pet care sheet has been produced by the RSPCA Companion Animals Department (V1 CAD/KW 04.11.10). This leaflet is provided for general information only and is not intended to be relied upon as specific advice. Whilst we try to ensure that the information is correct, we cannot accept any responsibility for the accuracy of the information, nor for any reliance on or use of the leaflet.*