

# The McPet Shop

## CHIPMUNKS

### General Information

Chipmunks are members of the squirrel family. They are active climbers being very nimble and quick. They are found naturally in North America and Eurasia. The most common pet species is the Siberian chipmunk, which will hibernate in the winter months if it gets too cold. When they hibernate their body temperature drops to just above the surrounding temperature. Individuals, which hibernate, tend not to live as long as those, which remain active. Chipmunks can be kept singly, in breeding pairs or in groups of 3 - 5 with one male for 2 - 3 females. Single sex groups can also be kept but there may be fighting if there is limited nesting space or food in wintertime.

### Housing

The ideal cage should be spacious, as large as possible, easy to clean and escape proof. The cage should have a minimum height of 1.2m. A large nesting box should be placed in the cage to provide your chipmunk with somewhere to sleep undisturbed. Good quality hay or straw should be placed in the nest box as bedding. Synthetic fibres should not be used, as chipmunks will take the material into their pouches leading to constipation. Chipmunks are very inquisitive animals and need to have plenty of toys available to keep them entertained. Therefore, the cage should be furnished with ladders, cork bark or bog wood to encourage exploration and allow your chipmunk to exercise. The floor of the cage should be covered with a layer of wood flakes or wood chips to absorb waste and to act as insulation. The cage should be cleaned out daily and needs to be disinfected at least once a month. Food bowls should be washed every day and disinfected at least once a month. Chipmunks kept outside must be provided with shelter, extra nesting material and stores of food. The nest must be in a frost proof position. If you keep your Chipmunk in doors house it well away from televisions, radios and any item that emits rapidly changing light patterns such as a computer screen.

### Exercise

A large cage or aviary, lots of toys and tunnels will provide all that your pet requires to keep them fit and healthy.

### Handling

A new chipmunk will be nervous due to the change of environment, so after preparing the cage or aviary, leave your pet alone for 24 hours to settle in. Talk gently and handle them as little as possible. Over handling at this stage causes stress, which can be fatal. When your pet is used to the new home, you should begin to introduce your hand into the cage gradually for short periods each day. Chipmunks are naturally inquisitive animals and will eventually learn to trust and will allow you to handle them.

### Feeding

The McPet Shop hamster mix and a little chipmunk food should be given fresh every day. Fresh fruit and vegetables may be given in moderation. A wood or dog chew should be given to prevent dental problems. Raw egg, mealworms and a little dog food may be given as a treat; this will help keep you chipmunk's coat in good condition and his skin healthy. Fresh water should be available at all times.

### Chipmunk Health

Chipmunks are not often affected by disease; however, their diet, housing and environment can have dramatic effects on their health, as the majority of diseases are stress-related. Fighting and overgrown teeth are the biggest health problems. If your chipmunk loses its appetite, some body weight, has runny eyes or nose, develops diarrhoea or has a poor coat or skin; seek veterinary advice.

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### Your Health and Hygiene

Chipmunks are clean animals, however, it is important to wash your hands before (so you do not frighten your pet with unusual smells) and after handling your chipmunk's area (to prevent the spread of infection). Remove soiled bedding in the living area daily and clean the cage/tank and sleeping area thoroughly once a week. Disinfect with a chipmunk friendly product.

### Key Chipmunk Facts

Weaning	6 weeks	Puberty	8 - 14 months
Gestation	28 - 35 days	Litter Size	Average 4
Adult Weight	72 - 120g	Life expectancy	Males 8 females 12 years

This Care leaflet is a basic guide only. More information is available from pet care books or the The McPet Shop guide available in the store.

### Guarantee

The McPet Shop does not guarantee the age or sex of any animal, bird or fish sold. All livestock is guaranteed for 48 hours from the time of sale. The McPet Shop aims to supply completely healthy pets. If a problem occurs within this period, then please contact the store.

### *CHECK - Tick the box as you complete your task*

#### Housing

- A large cage, the bigger the better. Solid floors are important.
- An outdoor **aviary**.
- **Bedding material** for the living floor (wood flakes or wood chips)
- **Bedding** for the sleeping box (hay or straw).
- A separate **sleeping box** or house.

#### Exercise

- A **wheel** with solid sides.
- Solid Perspex **tubes** to crawl through.
- Ladders, tunnels, wooden bark to chew

#### Feeding

- **Food** – A hamster and chipmunk food. Ask our associates what we have been feeding.
- **Food bowl and water bottle**.
- **Disinfectant** for feeding dishes and water bottle.
- **Chews**/wooden blocks.
- A vitamin **supplement**.

#### Knowledge

- ♦ Books to improve your pet knowledge.