

## Attention: Chinchilla Food Spoiler Alert

### **How to keep your chinchilla's food fresh.**

*Jessica Cordia*

A well-balanced diet will keep your chinchilla happy and healthy for years to come. Once you know what foods your pet chinchilla needs, learn how to keep the food fresh. Practicing good food storage techniques ensures that your chinchilla stays healthy.

First, check if the food is fresh. When buying commercial pellets, make sure they are in a sealed, air-tight package and have a uniform color. After opening the package, store the pellets in glass or tin air-tight containers.

"You don't want to store the pellets in the original packaging. Once it is open, air can get into the food causing it to go bad," said Anne K.G. Bazilwich, DVM, of The Grand Isle Veterinary Hospital and Paws and Laws in Grand Isle, Ver.

Timothy hay is another important staple in your chinchilla's diet. Make sure the hay is fresh before you buy it. The hay should be bouncy, have a green tint and not be soggy. Make sure you buy a reliable brand, and the packaging is sealed air-tight. If you're buying hay from a farm, make sure the hay is clean and was stored away from other animals. The hay should not contain bugs or be wilted.

Hay should be bought fresh once every week or two. Pellets should be bought once a month and vegetables should be fresh. Protect chinchilla food and hay from sunlight.

Avoid buying food that is close to reaching its expiration date, and don't store old food with new food. Keep separate glass or tin containers for each.

When you feed your pet chinchilla, put its food in a clean, healthy area in its cage. Keep the food away from the dust bath and litter box area. Make sure you remove old food from the cage before you put new food in.

And remember, fresh food equals a happy chinchilla.