

Choosing a Healthy Chinchilla

Follow these tips when selecting a chinchilla.

By Robin Rockey

Choosing the right chinchilla is the first step toward happy chinchilla ownership. Keep the following in mind when selecting your chinchilla:

Look for a chinchilla that appears alert and has bright, clear eyes.

Do not choose a chinchilla that looks sick, even if you feel pity for the animal.

Examine its ears to make sure they are not red or filled with an excessive amount of wax, because this could be a sign of infection.

A healthy chinchilla will not have discharge from its nose, mouth, eyes, anus or genital area.

Check for sores or other injuries on the chinchilla's body.

A healthy chinchilla will move quickly when startled.

Examine the animal's teeth to make sure they are not overgrown. Misaligned teeth cause health problems.

Spend some time with the chinchilla to determine if it is friendly and interested in its surroundings.

The right chinchilla will not appear aggressive or try to bite.

A chinchilla that has been handled frequently should be friendly and somewhat receptive to human touch.

A healthy chinchilla will not feel fat or thin. You should be able to feel its ribs with a thin layer of fat over them.