

## Gerbils Sleeping Outside House

**Is it normal for gerbils to sleep out in the open?**

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**Q:** We got two 7-week-old gerbils two weeks ago. Today I noticed that they were for the first time sleeping in a corner together, but not in their house. I lifted up their house and saw nothing out of the ordinary. Is that normal?

**A:** It is a little unusual that gerbils sleep out in the open, as they tend to like the security of a hiding spot. But as long as they are sleeping together, it is nothing to worry about. Sometimes if it is a warm day gerbils will sleep directly on the bedding or even clear a spot to sleep directly on the glass or plastic tank. Sometimes they will sleep under the water bottle using that as their shelter or will hide themselves inside the litter.

Another thought is that your gerbils are outgrowing their house. Nine-week-old gerbils are much bigger than 7-week-old gerbils. You could try a house that is 6 to 8 inches across and see what material they seem to like, such as sturdy cardboard, wood or ceramic. Just make sure if you take a house or toy out of the tank and return it days later that you wash it first. Wash it with cider vinegar diluted with water, then rinse it well with hot water and dry thoroughly.