

## Dental Disease In Chinchillas

### Is a chinchilla's sudden behavior change due to old age or illness?

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**Q:** How can you tell how old your chinchilla is? My chinchilla suddenly became lethargic and won't eat. It normally tries to jump and get away when I hold it, and it only lies there now. I don't find many urine spots in its cage either. What can I do about this?

**A:** Unfortunately, once a chinchilla reaches adult size, there is no way to tell how old a chinchilla is. The first thing you need to do is to visit your veterinarian.

When a chinchilla refuses to eat, the most common reason is dental disease. Chinchillas, like rabbits and guinea pigs, are prone to dental problems. The first sign of a problem can be a reluctance to eat. Once a chinchilla stops eating, it may become lethargic. Along with not eating, they might also stop drinking, hence you are seeing less evidence of urination.

However, chinchillas are prone to other diseases, and only an examination by a veterinarian can tell you exactly what is wrong with your chinchilla. Chinchillas, like other prey species, tend to hide their signs of disease until they are very sick. So even though it seems like your chinchilla has only recently become lethargic, this might be a long-standing problem. Therefore, it is important to get your chinchilla to your veterinarian's office as soon as possible.

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