

Lazy Hamster Or Medical Problem

How do you know if a hamster is less active or ill?

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Q: I am concerned about my hamster. She is about 5 months old and seems to be eating and going to the bathroom normally, but she is not very active, not even at night. Is there such a thing as a lazy hamster? I have a wheel in her cage. She used it for the first month I had her, and that was it. I have put her in a hamster ball several times around 8 or 9 p.m. and she just sits in it or sometimes chews at it. I get her out of her cage to let her crawl around on me or the sofa, and she just lays there. The only time she's not sleeping is when she is eating or drinking. I feed her a food with only 12 percent crude protein. I did notice on a few websites that hamsters should have at least 16 percent crude protein. Could a lack of protein cause her laziness?

A: Some hamsters really are just not as active as other hamsters. You may have one that's less active, but you ask a good question. If she normally had been very active, and is now slowing down, she may have a problem. If her bathroom habits are the same, then she may not have a problem. If she eats the same amount that she always does, then she may not have a problem.

Sometimes, hamsters slow down because they become fat. They overeat food that is too high in calories. How much does your hamster weigh? Do you think she is overweight?

Also, consider if anything has changed in your house. Have new pets come and gone? Have you changed anything with her cage? Is there new litter she doesn't like? Is there a new routine in the house that she is reacting negatively toward?