

Hamster Supplements And Treats

Find out what treats and supplements are best for a hamster.

By Audrey Pavia

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Commercial hamster foods are nutritionally complete, but if a hamster is a picky eater or you simply want to ensure that it receives all the nutrients it needs, it can't hurt to give a vitamin/mineral supplement. Vitamins and minerals promote good growth and healthy skin and joints, and help to counteract stress that can contribute to illness.

Supplements can come in the form of treats, chews or liquids that are added to drinking water. Mineral supplements usually contain salt, phosphorus and calcium, which are important for a hamster's good health.

Give vitamin and mineral supplements in moderation, and only after discussing this with your veterinarian. Too much of anything, even an essential nutrient, can be harmful.

Treats aren't essential, but they can contribute to a hamster's well-being. They're especially beneficial as rewards when you're accustoming your hamster to being held. Encouraging a hamster to take food from your fingers helps it learn to trust you.

The best treats for a hamster are fresh foods that are healthy as well as fun to eat. Offer them no more than once or twice a week and only in small amounts. This ensures that they remain special and that the hamster doesn't neglect its regular diet in favor of the treats. Good hamster treats include the following:

- A teaspoon of scrambled or hard-boiled egg with no salt
- A small, hard dog biscuit
- A small square of whole-wheat bread, plain or toasted, spread with a little unsalted peanut butter
- A teaspoon of dry, sugar-free cereal
- A couple of pieces of uncooked whole-wheat pasta
- A small, thin slice of apple (except for dwarf hamster species)
- A piece of baby carrot
- A small piece of cheese
- A teaspoon of plain yogurt
- A pinch of nutritional yeast (available in health food stores)
- A teaspoon of canary or parakeet seed

Many commercial treats are also available for hamsters. These are fine if given in very small amounts. Before giving commercial treats, read labels carefully. Some commercial treats are high in sugar, which isn't good for any hamster.