

Hamster Grooming Tips

Learn the basics of hamster grooming habits.

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Hamsters are clean by nature and spend much of their time grooming themselves. In fact, a hamster that doesn't groom itself may have an illness and should be checked by a veterinarian.

Although it does a good job of keeping itself clean, a hamster may enjoy a dust bath now and then. You can purchase dust powder for rabbits or bathing sand for chinchillas. Place the dust or sand in a shallow ceramic container that can't be overturned, and let your hamster roll around in it. Dust the hamster off when it's through and remove the bathing dish. Use fresh bathing dust or sand each time.

Wet baths can be detrimental to a hamster's health and removing essential oils from its coat, so it's best to avoid them. If a wet bath is absolutely necessary, use warm water and a shampoo made for hamsters or small animals and dry thoroughly with a towel. Keep the hamster in a warm place, out of drafts, until it's completely dry.

A hamster's teeth grow continuously and are kept at an appropriate length through gnawing, preferably on a piece of untreated wood or a branch from a hardwood tree that hasn't been treated with pesticides. Hamster-safe woods include aspen and oak, plus thoroughly dried fruit tree branches, such as apple or cherry.

If a hamster doesn't wear down its sharp toenails through digging and climbing, the nails can be trimmed using a small pair of human or cat nail clippers. Check them regularly to make sure they aren't getting too long.