

Rabbits and Guinea Pigs Together

You can have a rabbit and guinea pig living together in the same hutch but they are not as compatible as a lot of people would think they are.

This Fact Sheet is based on it **not** being a good idea to have them living together but if you do then it can help towards making their lives together much happier and healthier.

And there is one good reason to have them together, they are better company for each other than no company at all.

So let's talk about the reasons not to have a rabbit and guinea pig together:

- They are a different species, guinea pigs are rodents and rabbits are mammals (or lagomorphs to be precise) and really need to live different lifestyles
- They have different dietary requirements; a guinea pig needs more grain in their diet; if a rabbit has too much grain they will have an upset tummy and runny poos. A lot of mixed food is sold as being suitable for rabbits as well as guinea pigs which can be okay (depending on the mix) but your pets will be much healthier with the proper diet.
- Some stockfeed suppliers actually use horsefeed as a base for the mix then add rabbit pellets and maybe extra chaff, this feed will be high in grains which is okay for your GP but not the rabbit. Also, horsefeed often has molasses added to reduce the dust, this added sugar is not good for your rabbit or GP.
- There are now two different types of pellets available that are specifically made for rabbits or for guinea pigs, so obviously the manufacturers know there is a difference.
- A rabbit needs lots of fresh vegetables/greens and really can't have too much of the right thing; a guinea pig needs them too but if they have an unlimited supply they will get diarrhoea, especially eating things like broccoli or parsley which is very good for your rabbit
- If it is company you are looking for then a rabbit and guinea pig aren't always a good choice, generally speaking they will be indifferent to each other because of the vast difference in the species
- A rabbit can harm a guinea pig in several ways; a rabbit will be bigger and may want to dominate; a guinea pig won't recognise a rabbit's behaviour or warning signs and a kick from rabbit can do lots of harm; a male rabbit that isn't desexed will probably try to mount a guinea pig and constantly harm or distress the poor little thing

- A guinea pig isn't as clean as a rabbit; a rabbit will want to use one corner or a litter tray as toilet; a guinea pig will wee and poo everywhere, including in the food dish while it is eating!
- A guinea pig can live in a double-storey hutch with a ramp but it isn't natural for them and they won't be as happy or feel as safe as a rabbit; it's not natural for a rabbit either but a rabbit likes to play and they will have heaps of fun running up and down it; should a rabbit fall off a ramp they are much less likely to hurt themselves than a guinea pig
- Rabbits can carry a bacteria called *bordatella* which is harmless to them but fatal for a guinea pig

Oh, I just thought of another good reason to have them living together, no unwanted pregnancies!



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