Gerbil Checklist

Gerbils are mammals, native to Eastern Asia, smaller than rats and larger then mice. They are clean and odorless, which makes a wonderful combination for children and adults.

Gerbils are curious little creatures that can be handled easily, rarely bite and love attention. Unlike many small animals, they are active during the daytime, which adds to their "child appeal."

Following are some accessories you can provide for your new little pet that will make his/her life a happier and healthier one.

☐ **Housing:**
There are a variety of cages and plastic modular cages available, all of which will house your gerbil safely and comfortably. The plastic modular cage encourages youngsters to create their own custom-made hamster homes.

☐ **Food:**
Specially formulated foods are available for the optimal nutrition of your gerbil.

☐ **Treats:**
There are plenty of nutritional treats for your gerbil; biscuits, honey sticks, fruit and vegetable mixes for the culinary enjoyment of your pet.

☐ **Salt Block:**
Salt is an essential mineral for your gerbil. This will help your hamster retain the proper fluid levels in his/her system.

☐ **Vitamin Supplements:**
Liquid vitamin supplements help assure that all of the gerbil's nutritional requirements are fulfilled.

☐ **Skin/Coat Conditioner:**
Food supplements containing linoleic acid, aid in eliminating excessive scratching, dry skin, hair breakage (unseasonable shedding) while supplying essential fatty acids often missing in seed or chow diets.

☐ **Wood Blocks/Chews:**
Wood blocks aid in the satisfaction of a gerbil's chewing instinct. Because rabbit's teeth grow continuously, a chew toy or a small dog chew will help keep teeth filed down.

☐ **Litter:**
There are a wide variety of litters available for your small animal's cleanliness and comfort. Gerbils usually pick out one corner to urinate in. If you clean this spot daily and replace with fresh litter, the cage environment should remain odor free between weekly cleanings.

☐ **Water Bottle:**
Ball tips on water bottles help prevent leakage, which can soak bedding. Wet bedding is a health hazard to small animals. Be sure to place the tip of the water bottle in a position that is comfortable for the gerbil to drink. If the bottle is hung in a cage or tank, a metal bottle holder will keep him/her from chewing the bottle.

☐ **Bowl:**
A heavy-duty bowl is recommended for food to eliminate excessive spillage.

☐ **Exercise Ball/Wheel:**
An exercise ball will provide entertainment for you and your pet. More importantly, it aids in preventing obesity, which is a common health hazard for these pets. An exercise wheel allows the hamster to run and get needed exercise each night.

☐ **Toys:**
Many toys have a practical function besides offering hamsters entertainment. These include items such as wooden houses, which can be chewed to keep incisors trim. Gerbils like to burrow and hide. Many toys are available that can be made into playground of hiding places and tunnels for gerbils. Gerbils housed with toys are more active and interesting to watch, and the animals are content and happier.

☐ **Books:**
There are many books available that will give you information on the behavior and care of your new pet.