



Campbell's Dwarf Hamster Care Guide

Campbell's dwarf hamsters are small, energetic rodents with complex needs. While often marketed as "easy pets," they require space, careful diet management, and thoughtful handling to thrive.

Temperament & Behaviour

Campbell's dwarf hamsters are:

- Active, curious, and alert
- Naturally inquisitive and quick to explore their environment
- Often confident once settled, but can be cautious at first
- Mostly nocturnal to crepuscular (most active at dusk and during the night)
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With calm, consistent interaction, many Campbell's dwarfs can learn to tolerate and even enjoy gentle handling. However:

- Some individuals may be territorial, especially if stressed or overcrowded
- Sudden handling or frequent disturbance can lead to defensive behaviours such as nipping
- They are intelligent animals and benefit from mental stimulation as much as physical exercise

Campbell's dwarf hamsters are best suited to quiet households where their natural sleep-wake cycle is respected, and interaction is on their terms.

Housing & Enclosure

Minimum Enclosure Size

Recommended minimum enclosure size:

100cm (L) x 50cm (W) x 50cm (H)

While Campbell's dwarfs are small, they are highly active. Larger enclosures significantly improve welfare by allowing natural behaviours such as running, burrowing, and foraging.

Enclosure Requirements

A suitable enclosure must include:

- A solid base (wire or mesh flooring can cause foot injuries and prevents burrowing)
- Either:
 - A tank-style enclosure with a secure mesh lid, or
 - A barred cage with very narrow bar spacing and a deep solid base
- Enough uninterrupted floor space for running and exploration
- Good ventilation without drafts

Small cages, "starter homes," or novelty habitats do not meet welfare needs and should be avoided.



Bedding & Nesting

Campbell's dwarf hamsters are natural burrowers and require deep, stable bedding to feel secure.

Suitable Bedding (Examples)

Use a deep layer (20cm or more) of one or a mix of the following:

- Dust-extracted paper-based bedding
- Aspen or other non-aromatic wood shavings
- Hemp bedding

Deep bedding allows tunnelling, nesting, and temperature regulation.



Nesting Material

Provide soft nesting material so your hamster can build a secure sleeping area, such as:

- Shredded paper
- Unscented tissue paper
- Small amounts of hay

Avoid cotton wool or fluffy nesting materials — these can wrap around limbs or cause serious digestive blockages if swallowed.

Diet & Nutrition (Very Important)

Campbell's dwarf hamsters are genetically prone to diabetes, making diet one of the most critical aspects of their care.

Core Diet

The main diet should consist of a balanced hamster mix that provides:

- Seeds and grains
- Fibre
- Appropriate protein (such as insects)

Scatter feeding is strongly encouraged, as it:

- Promotes natural foraging behaviour
- Provides mental stimulation
- Reduces boredom

Sugar Management

A very low-sugar diet is essential.

Fresh Foods (Very Small Amounts)

Vegetables can be offered in small quantities a few times per week, for example:

- Leafy greens
- Broccoli
- Courgette
- Cucumber

Introduce new foods slowly and remove uneaten fresh food after a few hours.

Avoid fruit, sweet vegetables, and sugary foods entirely, as these increase the risk of diabetes and digestive upset.

Fresh, clean water must always be available.

Enrichment & Exercise

Enrichment is essential to prevent boredom, stress, and repetitive behaviours.

Essential Enrichment

- Solid running wheel (minimum 20–22cm diameter)
 - Must allow the hamster to run with a straight back
- Sand bath (essential for coat care and natural behaviour)
- Multiple hides and tunnels for security
- Scatter feeding rather than bowl-only feeding
- Safe chew items to support dental health



Additional Enrichment Ideas

- Cardboard tunnels and boxes
- Multi-chamber hides
- Rearranging enclosure layouts occasionally (without removing familiar nesting areas)

Rotate enrichment items to keep the environment stimulating without causing stress.

Health & Welfare Notes

Monitor your hamster daily for:

- Changes in appetite or activity
- Excessive drinking or urination (possible diabetes warning signs)
- Weight loss
- Lethargy or coat changes

Seek veterinary advice promptly if anything seems unusual — small animals can deteriorate quickly.