

# FEEDING YOUR HAMSTER

Correct nutrition, from as young as possible, even during gestation, will make a big difference in your hamster's well-being & longevity. Hamsters with poor nutrition usually suffer from malnutrition & various ailments, especially as they age.

The diet needs to consist of  
**GOOD QUALITY DRY MIX**  
**FRESH FOOD (fruit, veggies & protein)**  
**FRESH WATER (always)**

## HOW MUCH FOOD?

**DRY MIX + FRESH FOOD + TREATS = TOTAL**

**Syrian Hamsters:** 1.5 - 2 Tablespoons daily (maximum TOTAL)

**Dwarf Hamsters:** 1.5 - 2 teaspoons daily (maximum TOTAL)

**Do not overfeed** with just their favourite food!

This will not achieve sufficient nutritional balance, and you will also create a picky hamster!

Each hamster has its **individual likes and dislikes**, so don't be too worried if he leaves some ingredients behind from a good dry mix that has plenty of variety, but do give these a chance before topping up too much or discarding all.

**Monitor the hoarded stash too!**

An empty bowl does not mean he has no food left!

It is also fine to alternate between two good quality dry mixes every 2 - 4 weeks if you so wish.

**With a new hamster that has been on a poor diet, remember to introduce fresh foods slowly.**



# DRY MIXES

**DO NOT HANDLE YOUR HAMSTER WHILE THERE IS FOOD IN ITS POUCHES!**

Unfortunately here in SA we don't have a wide variety of good mixes on the shop shelves. Aside from including bad fruits and raisins, most have a huge amount of unhealthy/useless filler pellets, so you think you're getting a nice big bag of food.

Since most hamsters really don't enjoy pelleted foods, you will most likely end up throwing half the bag away.

## RECOMMENDED DRY MIXES

Syrian Hamsters and Dwarf Hamsters have different nutritional needs and it is therefore preferable to get a species-specific mix.



Hamsters South Africa Dwarf Hamster Mix  
Hamsters South Africa Syrian Hamster Mix  
Bunny Nature Hamster Dream Expert  
Bunny Nature Dwarf Hamster Dream Expert

**Little One Hamster and Dwarf Hamster**

*Not the absolute best but also not the worst, and could tide you over if you're in a pinch (certainly preferable to the other commercial mixes in shops).*

*Has some pellets, but apparently not as much as other brands.*



# FRESH FOODS

In addition to the dry foods, fresh food is absolutely vital in the diet for important vitamins, proteins and minerals, as well as the enjoyment of variety.

**A HAMSTER SHOULD NEVER LIVE ON DRY FOOD MIX ALONE!**

Uneaten perishable food must be removed daily.

## FOOD LISTS

Offer a very small amount of two or three fresh foods every evening,  
or a little buffet every 2nd or 3rd evening.  
As long as you provide a decent variety over the course of 5 - 7 days.

## COLOUR-CODED KEY

**PINK = High sugar foods. Be conservative.**

Dwarf Hamsters are prone to diabetes, so only one small piece every week as a treat.

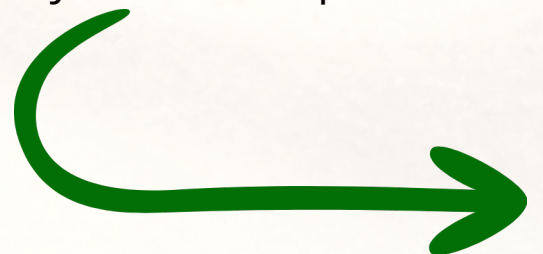
**GREEN = Cruciferous foods. Best cooked (boiled/steamed).**

If your hamster really loves these foods, COOK the veg to remove the problematic enzyme.

If your female hamster has had uterine infections or pyometra, avoid raw altogether, and be conservative with cooked too.

**ORANGE = High in oxalic acid. Small amounts only.**

Avoid altogether if your hamster has had kidney or bladder problems.





# SAFE FRUIT & VEG

Fruit pips are toxic.

Only give slivers that don't touch the skin & pip.

Vegetable seeds are good treats.

All, whether cooked or raw, must be plain with no seasoning or sugar.

Alfalfa (Small amount. Only for young & pregnant hamsters),

Apricot (not pip), Apple (no seeds),  
Asparagus.

Baby Marrow (Courgette/Zucchini),

Baby Spinach, Banana, Barley Grass,  
Bean (Mung) (cooked or sprouted only),

Blackberry leaves & fruit, Blueberry  
Broad beans,

Broccoli (florets & leaves - no thick stems),  
Butternut (cooked).

Carrot, Cherries (not the pips),

Cauliflower (florets & leaves - no thick stems),

Chickweed, Cornflowers (blue or pink),

Corn (baby corn, mealies)

Cranberry (not dried/crasins).

Dates, Dill 'leaves' (not bulb),

Dandelion flower/leaf/roots (not milky veins).

Endive (leafy parts only).

Fennel 'leaves' (not bulb), Figs,

Green Beans, Gem Squash (pips too).

Hemp (seeds & leaves).

Kale, Kiwi (without seeds).

Lentils (cooked or sprouted only),

Lettuce (darker types only - leafy tips only),

Loganberry, Lychee.

Mange Tout (snap peas/snow peas),

Mango, Marigold petals, Melon,

Mealie kernels (corn) (avoid for  
pregnant/nursing mums & baby hamsters),

Micro Herbs,

Millet (sprays can be left in the habitat),

Mung Beans (sprouted or cooked only).

Pansy/Viola flowers, Papaya, Parsnip,

Patti-Pans, Peach (no pip),

Pear (no seeds), Peas,

Peppers (sweet/salad kind)

Pet Grass, Plum & Prune (no pips),

Pumpkin (cooked).

Raspberry (not for pregnant  
hamsters), Rocket leaves,

Rose Petals (food grade only).

Snap/Snow Peas (mangetouts),

Spinach/Chard (small amount of leaf part),

Strawberry.

Tomato (flesh only), Turnip.

Water Cress, Water Melon, Wheat Grass,

Zucchini (courgette/baby marrow).

## ONCE OR TWICE A WEEK TREAT (TINY PORTION AT A TIME)

Artichoke (raw flesh only).

Basil leaf, Beetroot, Brussels Sprouts.

Celery, Chicory, Coconut (fresh),

Coriander (leaves & stems),

Cucumber (small piece).

Mint leaf.

Parsley (as a tonic),

Potato (well cooked flesh only)

Sweet Potato (well-cooked flesh only)

## MORE FRESH FLOWERS/HERBS



See website:

<https://www.hamsterssouthafrica.com/enrichment>

# SAFE PROTEINS & OTHER



## PROTEINS

(Hamsters are omnivores -  
NOT vegans or vegetarians!)

(2 OR 3 TIMES A WEEK)

Cooked/Steamed (not raw).

Plain (no seasoning, butter, sugar, etc.).

Small portions.

Beef (Lean/Extra-Lean).

Chicken meat.

Crickets (clean & specially bred).

Dubia Roaches (clean & specially bred)

Egg (hard boiled/ well scrambled).

Fish (not tinned)- Salmon, Tuna, Hake.

Grasshoppers (clean & specially bred).

Hills Restorative Care (chicken) tinned food.

Mealworms (fresh) (2 to 5 at a time).

Shrimps (Gammarus) - small fresh water.

Silkworms (dried or fresh 3 to 5 at a time).

Turkey meat.

Superworms (dry or fresh) 2 or 3 at a time -  
chop heads off the live worms first - the jaws  
are strong and can injure your hamster.

Tofu (rinsed and/or cooked) - high in fat and  
calcium, so only a tiny piece occasionally.

## TREAT FOODS

ONCE OR TWICE A WEEK  
(TINY PORTION AT A TIME)

**NUTS** - shelled, raw, unsalted:  
Sweet Almond, Brazil, Cashew, Hazel,  
Pecan, Pistachio.

Walnut can be in the shell.

Peanut (out of shell, one or two).

Bread (w/wheat toasted or not).

Cheese (only ricotta and low-salt cheeses).

Cornflakes (unsweetened & salt-free).

Couscous (cooked, plain).

Dog Biscuits (Plain, home-baked style only)

Flax/Linseeds (a pinch ground up).

Mealworms (dried) (2-3/day)

Oats & Barley flakes (soaked).

Pasta (pref. cooked, plain).

Provita crackers (small piece).

Quinoa (cooked, plain).

Rice (brown, cooked, plain).

Rice Cakes (unsalted - plain or multigrain)

Sunflower Seeds (hulled, not in shell, 2 or 3)

Weetbix (small amnt).

**Yogurt** - tiny amount, plain unsweetened,  
pref. organic (however, in the case of babies  
& nursing moms, a daily lick of yogurt can  
be particularly good).



# UNSAFE FOODS



Acorns, Alcohol, All-Bran Flakes,  
ALL FRUIT SEEDS & PIPS,  
Artificial Sweeteners, Aubergine, Avocado.

Bacon, Biltong, Bindweed, Bitter Almonds,  
Bran, Brinjal, Bulbs (of any sort), Butter.

Citrus Fruits (lemon, orange, naartjie, etc.),  
Cabbage (particularly stems and veins),  
Cheese (strong/yellow/salty types),  
Cayenne, Chives, Chocolate, Cinnamon,  
Coffee & Ceylon Teas, Coriander seeds,  
Cream, Crocus, Currants, Chicken Liver,  
Chickpeas (unless REALLY well cooked).

Deadly Nightshade, Dragon fruit.

Eggplant, Elderberry leaves & branches,  
Evergreen plants.

Garlic, Gooseberry, Grapefruit, Grapes,  
Greenies (dog chews).

Ham, Honey.

Jam, Jelly.

Kidney Beans.

Laurel, Leeks, Lemon,  
Lettuce (particularly Iceberg & light green),  
Limes, Liver.

Macon, Meat Fat, Milk & Cream.

Naartjie, Nutmeg.

Oak, Onion (all types), Olives, Oranges.

Peanuts in the shell, Pepper (spice), Pickles,  
Pineapple, Pomegranate,  
Potato eyes, leaves, skin, and raw pieces.  
Processed meats (bacon, ham, macon,  
polony, viennas, etc.).

Radish, Ragwort, Raisins, Rhubarb.  
Raw Meat & Eggs.

Salt, Sausages, Spices, Sugar, Sultanas.  
Sunflower seeds in shell (black or white)  
Sweet Potato (raw), Sweets/Candy.

Tomato seeds, green parts & flowers.  
Tomato Paste.

Vinegar

## UNSAFE FLOWERS, HERBS/PLANTS

See website:

<https://www.hamsterssouthafrica.com/enrichment>

**IF IN DOUBT - DON'T FEED!**

