Hamster Care Checklist

A hamster care checklist covering cage setup, bedding, diet, the wheel, cleaning and handling.

Cage & Setup

- [ ] Choose a cage with a large continuous floor area
  Bigger than typical starter cages; secure against escapes
- [ ] Position the cage away from drafts, direct sun and noise
- [ ] Add a hideout or sleeping house
- [ ] Include a sand bath for grooming
- [ ] Keep the cage out of reach of other pets

Bedding & Substrate

- [ ] Use deep, dust-free bedding suitable for burrowing
- [ ] Provide safe nesting material such as plain paper
- [ ] Avoid pine and cedar shavings
  Their oils can cause respiratory irritation
- [ ] Spot-remove soiled and damp bedding daily

Diet & Water

- [ ] Provide a quality hamster food mix or pellets
- [ ] Offer small amounts of safe fresh vegetables
- [ ] Give occasional protein or treats in moderation
- [ ] Supply constant fresh water in a bottle or bowl
- [ ] Remove uneaten fresh food before it spoils

Exercise & Enrichment

- [ ] Provide a correctly sized solid-surface wheel
- [ ] Add tunnels, chews and climbing items
- [ ] Offer foraging by scattering some food in bedding
- [ ] Allow supervised time in a safe exercise area
- [ ] Provide safe chew toys to manage growing teeth

Cleaning Routine

- [ ] Spot-clean soiled bedding and the toilet corner daily
- [ ] Wash the water bottle and food bowl regularly
- [ ] Clean the wheel and accessories weekly
- [ ] Do a partial deep clean while preserving some old bedding
  Keeping some scent reduces stress
- [ ] Refresh the sand bath as needed

Handling & Health

- [ ] Let a new hamster settle before regular handling
- [ ] Build trust gradually with calm, low handling
- [ ] Check teeth, eyes, nose and coat for problems
- [ ] Watch for wet tail, lethargy or weight loss
- [ ] Consult a small-animal vet for any health concern