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VITAMIN C IN GUINEA PIGS

In order for the body of any being to function properly, vitamin C is required. Most animals have the ability to manufacture vitamin C in their bodies all on their own without the help of any supplements. Guinea pigs, humans, songbirds and other primates share a gene mutation that prevents the production of vitamin C. That is why we and guinea pigs need to obtain vitamin C through outside sources or foods.

The best way to get adequate vitamin C in your guinea pig is through fresh, healthy fruits and vegetables. Your pig should be getting about 25 mg of vitamin C per day. It's important to know how much of what food item you need to make up that 25mg. Obviously you want to make sure you don't under-dose the amount but it's also important to not overdose the amount as well.

There are supplements for vitamin C that you can use instead of fresh food. Some say you can crush up a tablet and dissolve it in their drinking water, however this isn't always recommended as it changes the taste of the water. Your guinea pig may not want to drink it due to the change so at that point, not only is your pig not getting its vitamin C but it's also not getting enough water which can lead to slight dehydration. You can try giving your pig a vitamin C tablet or liquid directly to eat as many do enjoy it. However, you will come across the occasional pig to not enjoy the supplement and be picky with what they eat. For example, GMVH's own Elvis Pigsley at the front desk does not enjoy his chewable tablets. Instead he enjoys a fresh salad of mixed greens, fruits, and veggies each morning to give him the appropriate amount of nutrition.

See the chart on below that shows a list of fruits and veggies that are options for vitamin C supplementation ranked from excellent to poor.

FOOD ITEM	AMOUNT OF FOOD	VITAMIN C IN THAT AMOUNT OF FOOD	AMOUNT NEEDED TO PROVIDE 25mg/day
Guava	1 cup	377 mg	1.1 tbsp
Red Peppers	1 cup chopped	190 mg	2.1 tbsp chopped
Kale	1 cup chopped	80.4 mg	5 tbsp (1/3 cup)
Mustard tendergreens	1 cup chopped	195 mg	2.1 tbsp chopped
Parsley	1 cup	79.8 mg	5 tbsp (1/3 cup)
Broccoli	1 cup chopped	81.2 mg	5 tbsp (1/3 cup)
Broccoli flowerets	1 cup	66.2 mg	6 tbsp (1/3 cup – 1/2 cup)
Broccoli leaves	1 ounce	26.1 mg	2 tbsp
Broccoli stalks	1 ounce	26.1 mg	2 tbsp
Lambsquarter	1 ounce	22.4 mg	2.2 tbsp
Cauliflower	1 floweret	6.0 mg	~ 4 flowerets

Excellent

Sources:

(1) South Wilton Veterinary Group www.southwiltonvet.com:
 "Introduction to Guinea Pigs" "Guinea Pig Housing" "Feeding Guinea Pigs" "Guinea Pig Behavior" "Common Illnesses"
 (2) Rhody DVM, Jeff. "Vitamin C Supplements for Guinea Pigs" *VeterinaryPartner* 22 March 2009

Good	Strawberry	Avg berry	10.6 mg	~ 2.5 avg berries
	Kiwi	1 cup	164 mg	2.4 tbsp
	Green Peppers	1 cup chopped	120 mg	3.4 tbsp chopped
	Mustard Greens	1 cup	39.2 mg	1/2 – 3/4 cup
	Cooked broccoli	1 cup	101.2 mg	1 cup
	Cooked Brussels sprouts	1 cup	96.7 mg	Just over a cup
Fair	Kohlrabi	1 cup	89.1 mg	Just over 1/2 cup
	Papaya	1 cup	86.5 mg	Just under 1/3 cup
	Snap peas	1 cup	58.8 mg	Just under 1/2 cup
	Turnip greens	1 cup	39.5 mg	Just under 1/2 cup
	Red cabbage	1 cup	39.9 mg	Just under 1/2 cup
	Orange	Avg orange	69.7 mg	1/4 – 1/2 of avg orange
	Cooked kale	1 cup cooked	53.3 mg	~ 1/2 cup
	Peas	1 cup	58 mg	~ 1/2 cup
	Clementines	Avg clementine	36.1 mg	Almost 1/2 avg clementine
	Cantaloupe	1 cup melon balls	65 mg	1/4 – 1/2 cup of melon balls
	Pineapple	1 cup chunks	78.9 mg	1/3 cup of chunks
Poor	Dill weed	5 sprigs	0.9 mg	154 sprigs
	Dried Tarragon	1 ounce	14 mg	~ 4 tbsp
	Dried Basil	1 ounce	17.1 mg	~ 3 tbsp
	Dried Oregano	1 ounce	14 mg	~ 4 tbsp
	Dried Cilantro	1 tbsp	9.9 mg	2.5 tbsp
	Lemon	Avg lemon	30.7 mg	80% of avg lemon
	Grapefruit	Avg fruit	38.5 mg	Just under a grapefruit
	Beet greens	1 cup	11.4 mg	Over 2 cups
	Starfruit	Avg fruit	31.3 mg	Over 1/2 of avg starfruit
	Collard Greens	1 cup	12.7 mg	2 cups
	Watercress	1 cup chopped	14.6 mg	~ 1 1/2 cups

Sources:

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