



ALL ABOUT

# HAY & YOUR PET'S HEALTH



KEY

## Health Benefits OF Hay



### DIGESTIVE HEALTH

- The fiber in hay facilitates the constant digestive movement that small herbivores need to maintain digestive health.
- Disrupting movement in the GI tract even for a short period of time can lead to a number of potentially life-threatening issues.
- Providing grass hay most closely mimics the foraging activity small herbivores would perform in nature, making hay the ideal material to support digestive health.



### DENTAL HEALTH

- Small herbivores require constant chewing of fibrous foods to provide proper, necessary dental wear. Hay is the ideal material to serve this important function.
- The teeth of rabbits, guinea pigs, and chinchillas never stop growing, making it critical to provide a proper diet centered around hay.
- A diet with insufficient hay can lead to dental issues including disease, tooth elongation, and malocclusion.



### MENTAL HEALTH

- Hay encourages the natural foraging behaviors of small pets, providing an essential opportunity for mental stimulation.
- Access to a variety of high-quality hays provides different tastes and textures for your pet, keeping him active, engaged and healthy.
- Place hay in as many locations as possible throughout your pet's living space to maximize mental enrichment.

As the pet parent of a small herbivore, you know that hay is important to your pet's health, but have you ever wondered exactly how hay helps keep your pet healthy and happy? Let's take a closer look at some of the specific functions that hay provides to your pet's daily health.

## Tips For Preventing GI Stasis

Gastrointestinal Stasis is a serious condition that occurs when the digestive system slows down or stops completely. As a pet parent, there are key steps you can take to minimize the likelihood that your pet experiences this condition:

- Feed a high fiber diet centered around unlimited grass hay (at least 70% of the diet)
- Schedule regular veterinary checkups for your pet (at least once a year for healthy pets)
- Keep a watchful eye out for signs of underlying issues (e.g. visible pain, dental health issues, infections, etc.)
- Make sure your pet gets plenty of exercise and has access to two sources of fresh water



## TOP 5 REASONS TO OFFER YOUR PET a Variety of Hays

**A**ll pets benefit from some variety in their diet – especially when it comes to hay. There are a number of important benefits to providing a variety of grass hays. Here are the top five reasons to offer hay variety to your small animal.

### 1. Helps Prevent Picky Eating

Access to a variety of tastes and textures can expand your pet's palate and help him manage the natural variability that can occur between bags of hay.

### 2. Supports Key Nutritional Needs

Fiber is key to your small herbivore's health. Having access to multiple varieties of hay encourages consumption throughout the day, making sure your pet consumes enough fiber to stay healthy.

### 3. Keeps Mealtime Fun & Enriching

Eating the same meal day after day gets boring! Offer multiple varieties to keep your pet active, mentally stimulated, and enriched.

### 4. Strengthens the Human/Animal Bond

Offering your pet a variety of tastes and textures is fun for pet and pet parent alike. Experiment with different flavor combinations to help discover your pet's favorites.

### 5. Encourages Natural Foraging Behaviors

In the wild, your pet would spend much of his day foraging for a variety of plant material. Offer multiple varieties of hay to encourage these healthy, natural behaviors.



## Hay: It's Not Just For Herbivores!



Hay is critical to the health and wellbeing of herbivores, but other pets benefit from this high fiber forage as well. Hay is a great source of physical enrichment for birds, hamsters, gerbils, rats, and other small pets. From bedding to burrowing to general exploring, these pets will benefit from access to hay in their daily routine.

Hamsters and gerbils may enjoy oat hay, which often contains tasty, immature seed heads.



### WHAT ARE "OPEN-ROOTED" TEETH?

Rabbits, guinea pigs, chinchillas, and other small animals have "open-rooted" teeth. This means that these teeth grow continuously throughout the animal's life. Without proper dental wear, serious issues can arise, including malocclusion (improper alignment of top and bottom teeth), tooth elongation, and dental disease. Eating hay regularly provides your pet the necessary wear and helps ensure that teeth do not become overgrown.

## DIY MENTAL ENRICHMENT



To make mealtime more mentally enriching for your pet, try stuffing hay into hideouts or other "safe to chew" containers, such as toilet paper or paper towel rolls. For added enticement, bury a couple of your pet's favorite treats in hay and watch him eagerly hunt for them.

## WHY Oxbow Hay?

- Grown and harvested by experts in ideal climates
- Extensively quality tested – from plant to pet
- Gently processed and de-dusted to remove fine particles
- Carefully hand-sorted by dedicated experts
- Supported by exceptional, caring customer service



For more information about your pet's nutrition and behaviours, visit [www.oxbowaustralia.com](http://www.oxbowaustralia.com)