













Care & Feeding of Chinchillas

<http://www.MaineChinchillaRanch.com/care>

The First Two Weeks

-  Leave them in the cage for the first two weeks, do not take them out to play or hold.
-  Chinchillas need to have pellets, hay, and water always available. The first week, feed only the pellets I provided, then mix them half & half with the new food until gone.
-  Establish a routine and build their trust! Chins love to know what to expect throughout the day. Try to interact with them at the same times each day. You will see that they will wait at the front of the cage when they expect something good to happen, like treats, food, dusting, or your attention. ☺
-  Your chins might hide and be antisocial with you and/or their cagemates for the first two weeks, this is normal behavior while they are adjusting to their new home. Be consistent with your behavior and schedule so that they will learn to trust you.
-  Offer your chins 1/4 unsweetened mini shredded wheat (MSW) twice daily, in the same location through the bars. Speak gently and hold tight to the MSW while they eat it from your fingers. You'll be teaching them that it's safe to take treats from you and begin to establish a bond with them. Training your chinchillas that they will receive their MSW in a specific location will also be helpful if you have two chins.
-  Do not give your chins any treats other than the mini shredded wheat.
-  After a week, open the door, put one hand inside, and offer the treat with the other. Only let them eat the treat if they touch or sit on your hand. Do not take them out of the cage, even if they want to come out.
-  Check that the temperature in their area does not go above 70 degrees, and that they are not exposed to sunlight or drafts.
-  Mounting and chasing are normal dominance and play behaviors, but separate chins if they are pulling fur or injuring each other. Call me if you find tufts of fur or blood in the cage, see bite marks, or see violent behavior.
-  Your chins may make warning calls when they sense that something is different or frightening and warn the others with a loud “eeeeep eeep eeep eeep eeep” sound. Sometimes chins will even do this in their sleep! After the chins are used to your home, they will only make warning calls when they see, smell, or hear something strange. Some chins will make a warning call when a new person visits the home.
-  Chinchillas need a dust bath a minimum of twice weekly. After they have each dusted remove the dust bath from the cage.
-  **Call, text, facebook, or email Marianne with any questions! (207) 626-0130**

Care & Feeding of Chinchillas

<http://www.MaineChinchillaRanch.com/care>

Food & Water



Timothy Hay

- Always have fresh timothy hay available
- Do not feed hay with treats mixed in. Remove any weeds or leaves.
- The most economical hay can be found by the bale from a local farmer or feed store. Ask for 2nd cut horse feed hay. Store hay in a dark, cool, & dry area, a large covered plastic container works great.
- Feed the loose hay from the top of the cage, ceramic pot, box, or a hay rack outside the cage. Wire hay racks or balls inside the cage are often traps that result in injuries.
- Hay cubes may be used instead of loose hay, chins will eat about one 1" cube daily

Pellets

- Always have pellets available, chins should be free fed.
- Never feed pellets with treats or extras mixed in



Recommended Pellet Foods:

25 and 50 lb bags:

- Blue Seal Bunny 16 /Furry Friends
- Oxbow Essentials (Red Bag)
 - MannaPro Pro Rabbit (TSC)
 - Mazuri chinchilla
 - Supreme Science Selective

- Blue Seal Hutch 17 (MCR feed)
 - Nutrena Rabbit Feed 16%
 - MannaPro Sho Rabbit

Treats

- No more than 1/2 teaspoon per day
- Never mix treats with pellets
- Only feed treats to chinchillas over eight months old.
- **Only one safe treat from this list daily:**

- 1 Mini Shredded Wheat (MSW)
- 3 cheerios
- 1 dried rose hip
- 1/2 teaspoon rolled oats or supplement
- 6" blade of fresh timothy grass
- Fresh dandelion leaf 1" square
- 6" apple stick

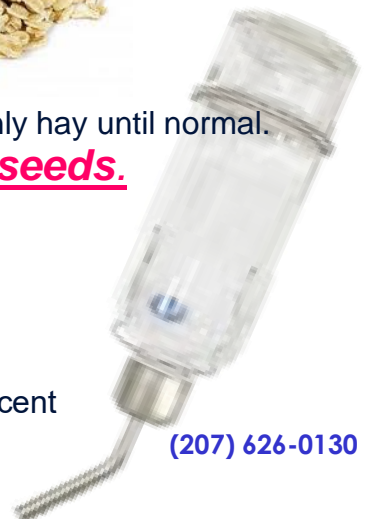


- If your chin has soft or sticky poo, give them a MSW twice daily and feed only hay until normal.

- **Never feed dried or fresh vegetables, fruits, nuts, or seeds.**

Water

- Always have fresh clean water available in a water bottle.
- Glass bottles are recommended to avoid chew damage
- Clean bottle with hot soapy water monthly
- Bottled or filtered water is recommended, chins don't like chlorine taste or scent



Care & Feeding of Chinchillas

<http://www.MaineChinchillaRanch.com/care>

Supplies for your cage

Bedding - fine pine shavings

- Fill your pan about 2" deep
- Change all bedding weekly
- **NO CEDAR**
- **No Carefresh** or shredded paper products
- Your chinchilla will most likely choose one spot for pee but will poop everywhere. Many chins will use a shallow glass dish in their favorite corner as a litter pan, allowing for spot cleaning of the cage.
- Wire floors and a litter pan (2 Qt lasagna pan) are a safe and popular alternative to a full pan of shavings. Prevue Rat and Chinchilla cage is the cage we recommend most often.

Chew Items & Cage Decor

• Wood shelves & houses

- Multi use: chew items, shelf, and shelter
- **Place at 6" vertical increments to limit chin's activity.**
- may be made from kiln dried (KD) pine or spruce
- **more shelves are always better, chins love to hide!**
- Look for houses constructed with no nails or staples
- Thicker wood will last longer

• Wood items

- small pieces of pine wood are fun for chins to chew and carry
- No hard woods like oak, mahogany, and no cedar or evergreens
- No paint, stain, polyurethane, oil, varnish, pressure treated, chip board, plywood, luan, fresh evergreen branches, cedar, molded wood composite products, nails, or staples.
- You can harvest your own apple wood by clipping clean, thin branches and baking them until dried through.

• Pumice chew blocks

- Look for toys with no glue or rope
- Pedicure pumice stones with no paint, scent, or added chemicals
- Pieces of grill bricks

• Fleece items

- Only anti-pill fleece fabric is safe for use with chinchillas
- Hammocks should be fleece fabric with no plastic clips or nylon straps
- Plastic shelves and PVC tubes should be covered in fleece to prevent chewing.

• Can I try...?

- If it's not listed here, please don't experiment! Chinchilla gut flora is delicate, so simple is best!
- We do not recommend cardboard, paperboard, pinecones, leaves, or wood from outdoors.

• Do not use these items in your cage:

- Plastic igloo houses
- Plastic "tree trunk" huts
- Edible houses, logs, tubes, houses, etc.
- Any edible toys with food or treats
- Toys or treats made with corn, rice, or wheat products
- Hay balls or racks of any type inside the cage.



Care & Feeding of Chinchillas

<http://www.MaineChinchillaRanch.com/care>

Hygiene & Exercise

Dusting

- Chinchillas need to have a dust bath a minimum of twice weekly.
- Never bathe a chin in water.
- Bathing dust is made from crushed pumice. Do not use kitty litter, sand, corn meal, flour, etc.
- Good brands include ChillDust, Blue Cloud, and Blue Sparkle
- Add a sprinkle of Desenex or Tinactin powder to your dust to help prevent fungus.
- Offer your chin dusting outside the cage during your quiet time with them.
- Dust containers:
 - Plastic Dust Houses are stable and safe, take them out of the cage after use.
 - Remove from cage after dusting, sitting in dust will chap their feet and can contribute to bumblefoot.
 - High sides or enclosed containers are best for controlling dust scatter
 - Glass 1 gallon jars
 - Ventilated plastic storage boxes
 - Cat litter pans, dish pans
 - Kitchen pots, pans, or bowls
- Corn starch or talcum baby powder can be added to the dust for a whiter coat.
- If your chinchilla is very dirty, handled often, or to prepare for show, offer it dust daily.

Cleaning the cage

- Clean the cage once weekly and replace all bedding
- Urine stains in pans and on wire can be most easily removed by soaking with vinegar and scrubbing with dish soap added to the vinegar. If your cage has a wire floor, provide a glass litter pan.
- Remove any fabric that chins chew, inspect hammocks and covers carefully
- Food dishes should be emptied of all fines often and washed as necessary.
- Water bottles and their tubes should be washed with hot soapy water. A baby bottle brush is perfect.
- An extra cage or hard sided cat carrier is very helpful on cleaning day.

Activity

****** DO NOT EXERCISE CHINCHILLAS ******

- Time outside their cage is **stressful**
- Stress and subsequent weight loss contribute to illness
- Do not place your chin in a ball
- Do not have a wheel in the cage
- Babies need their calories for growth
- **Wild chinchillas live in crevices and burrows, they enjoy a hiding spot like a house or low shelf. They spend 90% of their time in their burrows, and don't want or need exercise.**
- **Limit** outside-the-cage time to 30 minutes daily for adults, 15 minutes for young growing chins.
- Holding and carrying are great ways to interact. Start building a bond by offering oats or small pieces of shredded wheat EACH time they are held or taken out of the cage.
- Teach them to sit on your shoulder by first feeding oats with your elbow on the open cage door, then luring them to your shoulder. With time and patience, you can teach them to sit on your shoulder. Caution: chins can break or dislocate bones in a fall, always hold their tail.
- A chinchilla loose in your home will chew everything it encounters, including your furniture, books, wires, fabric, flooring, woodwork, doors, and anything else it can reach! Prevent damage to your home, illness and stress to your chinchilla by simply enjoying quiet time together on a sofa or bed.

Care & Feeding of Chinchillas

<http://www.MaineChinchillaRanch.com/care>

From ECBC magazine January 2022

The Tail Hold Can Save Your Chinchilla's Life

Time and time again we hear of injuries that happen to chinchillas when they are outside their cage. Many times these are injuries because the chinchilla became startled and jumped from their owners' arms or shoulder. The photo is an x-ray of a chinchilla who did leap out of their owners' arms in such a situation. This injury is significant.

The tail hold appears mean, but in fact is actually the safest way to move your chinchilla. Let me explain why:

Chinchilla bones are very small and can break easily from falls. The chinchilla ribs are fragile and their shoulder blades can be fractured or even do damage to internal organs in the chest cavity if the animal is held too tightly round their mid-section.

On the other hand, holding a chinchilla by the base of its tail is a good option for many reasons. There are no nerves in the section of the spine that can be damaged. The base of the tail is thick with strong muscles and tendons, as the tail works as a rudder to set direction when the chinchilla is fleeing a predator. Therefore, this area is very strong and can withstand trauma quite well.

Lastly, being at the bottom of the food chain, chinchillas frighten easily. When frightened they leap and escape the prey animal that is looking for a meal. Fear can easily come from the family dog, a loud noise, a cat that jumps down in your vicinity. When this happens the fight or flight response kick in and the chinchilla is much more likely to jump and run rather than fight (Otherwise known as lovers not fighters!)

What is a proper tail hold you ask? Well it is simply holding firmly the tail at the base of the tail, right where the soft fur meets the bristly tail fur.

With the opposite hand and arm support the weight of the animal. By doing this they feel secure and do not fight it as they might if you hold them only by their tail and allow them to dangle. If you hold the animal in this manner and something startles them, they may still jump or push off your arm with their strong back legs, but they will not escape or fall and hurt themselves because you maintain a firm grip. **Please become proficient at holding your chinchilla in this manner for their safety!**



Chinchilla with a fractured hip and dislocation of the sacro ligament joints after jumping from the owner's arms.



FREE COUPON

Congratulations on your new chinchilla!



We at Empress Chinchilla, the National Chinchilla organization, know how important it is to keep your chinchilla healthy for a long life. We want to get you and your chinchilla off to a great start!



FREE 3 Month Membership

We have been producing a monthly educational Chinchilla magazine for over 75 years. We want to give you a free 3 month membership to get you started on the right track with your new pet! At the end of the three months we would love it if you would join for a year, but if you choose it is not right for you, there is absolutely no obligation – promise!

Healthy treats, training methods, proper diet, bedding, safe toys? We can help you find the answers to these and many more questions with our years of experience raising chinchillas.

Contact Maxine at empresschinchilla@gmail.com today to start your free 3 month trial membership!

Still not quite sure? How about a free sample magazine? Request it today at the email above

www.chinchillabox.com

HASSLE-FREE FOOD, DUST, HAY, and more. MONTHLY SUBSCRIPTION

\$39.50 + shipping / month

Everything you need for a healthy chinchilla

– in one box – delivered fresh to your doorstep each month!

State

Zip Code

Referred by a Chinchilla Rescue? Please enter rescue name (N/A leave blank)

MAINE CHINCHILLA RANCH

Continue to Checkout



Sorry all! Our very talented chinchilla model is not included with subscription

Did you hear about us from a Chinchilla Rescue? ChillaBox will donate \$3 per box for all rescue-based referrals!

New subscribers enter: Maine Chinchilla Ranch

Care & Feeding of Chinchillas



We (breeders the world round) will tell you that Out of Cage Playtime is not necessary for the health and emotional wellbeing of your chinchilla. Interacting with them in their cage is just as acceptable.

Remember, most accidents and injuries happen out of the cage.

While we advise that it's not necessary, we do recognize that people want to engage in the activity.

When enjoying Out of Cage Playtime you should remember a few guidelines.

1. Playtime must be in a chin safe space. Chinchillas are quick- they can bite into a live cord and electrocute themselves, they can peel the paint from your walls and they can fit into some pretty ridiculously small spaces. Use the bathroom, a hallway or get a playpen.
2. No other animals should be in the room- chinchillas do not speak any language other than chinchilla. You can swear up one side and down the other that your doggo is the gentlest of giants but chinchillas are prey animals - they believe that everything wants to eat them.. including you.
3. Chinchillas should not be out of the cage longer than 20-30 minutes. Chinchillas overheat and over exert easily. They're den dwellers- being out of their den (cage) kicks their stress responses into overdrive.. stress releases cortisol which lowers their immune systems..
4. Playtime must be 100% supervised. See above- it only takes a moment for a chinchilla to kill themselves or hide from your view. This means eyes on- 100%. We suggest 20-30 minutes because frankly most humans don't have the attention span beyond that.. We get distracted by our phones, the tv and conversations with our partners.
5. Chinchillas under 6 months should have no Out of Cage Playtime. Their systems are still developing and they need all their calories for healthy growth and development.

To conclude- you don't have to do Out of Cage Playtime but if you do, follow the guidelines above.

Out of Cage Playtime is for your entertainment- not your chin's.

Don't anthropomorphize your chinchilla. They are not human- they are a fluffy rodent that you've taken stewardship of. Make responsible decisions with their care and they'll reward you with a long life.

@Chinchilla.Lovers · Facebook Community

Care & Feeding of Chinchillas

<http://www.MaineChinchillaRanch.com/care>

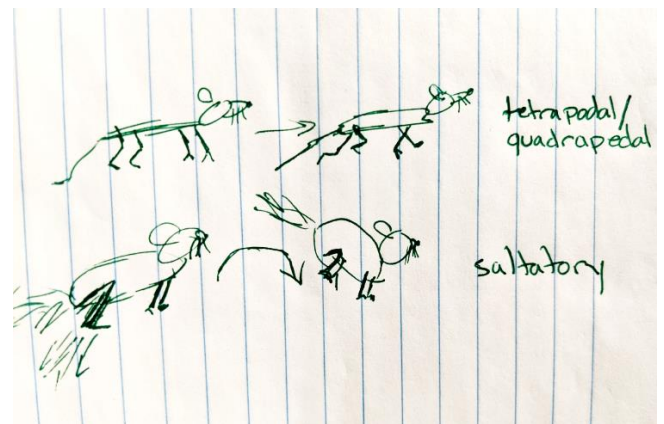
Should I get my chinchilla a wheel so they can be happy?

By RDZC chinchillas, Tabitha Lindsay www.rdzcranch.com/wheels-good-or-bad.html

A common question asked by chinchilla owners is "which wheel is best and what wheel should you get for chinchillas?" There has been a lot of money put into marketing for exercise wheels for small animals, but this is not always the most appropriate form of stimulation and exercise for an animal. There are several things to consider with chinchillas for their physiology and their anatomy that determine if a wheel is a suitable option for them.

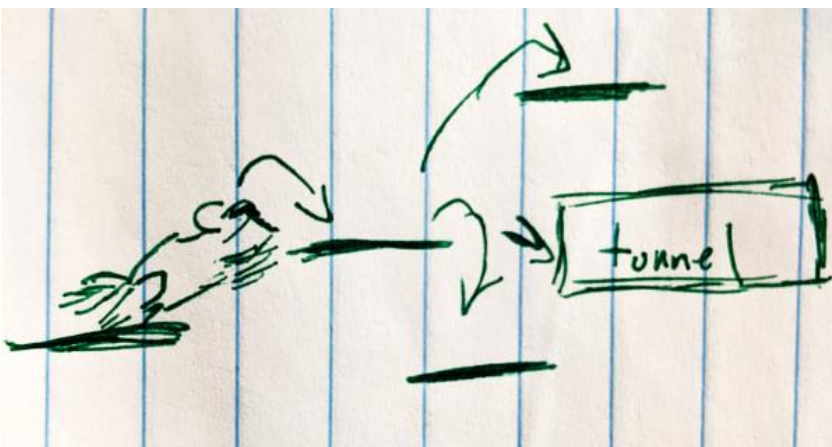
1. Locomotion Chinchillas locomotion (how they move) is done by saltation. Saltation is derived from the Latin word "saltus" which means "leap." Saltation is locomotion that is discontinuous and generates a hopping motion. Animals that move by saltation have physiological adaptations for these movements. **Most notably, the hind limbs are approximately twice as long as the front limbs. This makes them suitable for leaps and bounces, but not continuous forward momentum as required for running.** Many four-legged mammals like dogs, cats, rats, and many species of mice move in a tetrapodal or quadrupedal locomotion. This motion is going to generate the ability to run or walk on flat surfaces in a continuous fashion. The limbs are usually balanced in length and move synchronously allowing for an even gait and is very suitable for running and walking in continuous forward momentum.

So, **while some mammals are physiologically designed to run, chinchillas are not.** What we have seen in several cases with chinchillas is they are prone to tripping or losing balance if they get their exercise wheel spinning too quickly, and while it is uncommon, there have been several reported cases of the chinchillas being flung across the cage and hitting the side so hard they suffer internal organ damage and die. In other cases, because the feet are not designed for running, the calluses on their feet can be worn off from running and/or pressure sores are created leading to wounds on the feet that can quickly become infected and develop into bumblefoot.



Tetrapodal/Quadrupedal Locomotion vs. Saltatory

So, if running is not ideal...how do you ensure your chinchilla is going to get adequate exercise and stimulation? First, it is important to note that **your chinchilla is descended from BURROWING Chilean chinchillas** (as described in the Journal of Mammology back around 1930 when an official description was finally written on them) and not from the mountainous high up rock climbers (these would-be Chinchilla brevicaudata which DO NOT exist in captivity per a scientific population genetics study conducted on wild and domestic chinchillas in the early 2000s).



Burrowing animals spend most of their time living within the burrow system they make which is composed of small tunnels and chambers only large enough for the chinchillas to sleep in and/or turn around in. They feel secure with more hiding spaces, tunnels, and ledges. Basically, you can make their cage more like a burrow for them as a system of tunnels and ledges and houses with chew toys and this will provide much more appropriate stimulation and exercise for the chinchilla.

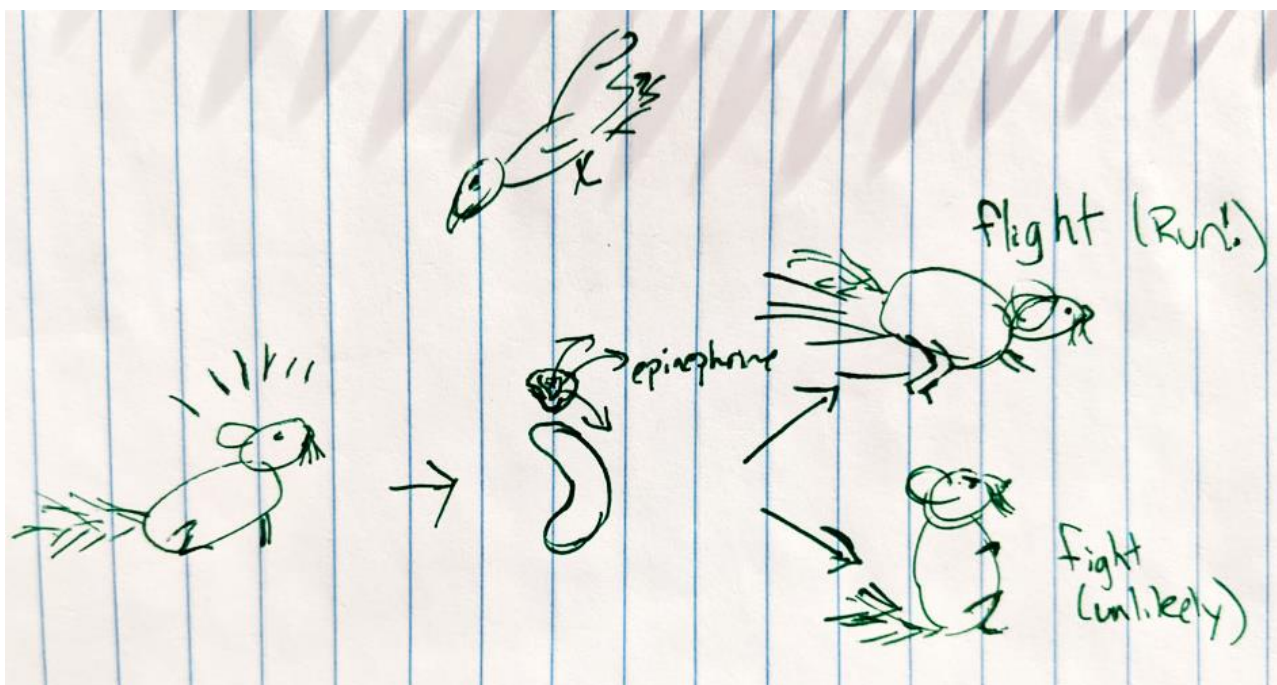
Appropriate exercise model for chinchillas

Care & Feeding of Chinchillas

<http://www.MaineChinchillaRanch.com/care>

2. Hormonal Controls - Fight or Flight!

Part of the neurological system known as the autonomic nervous system is one that is under “automatic” control and is involuntary. Things that are controlled by the autonomic nervous system include things like pupil dilation and constriction in response to changes in light, movement of gastrointestinal muscles for digestion, release of saliva in anticipation of food, and your fight or flight response in situations that are dangerous or require more mobility. One key hormone (a chemical signal) that will be released in times of danger is called epinephrine, or more commonly referred to as adrenaline. This hormone is produced naturally in the body from the medulla (center tissue) of the adrenal gland which is an endocrine organ that sits just above the kidneys. During times of danger or when heightened awareness is needed, this system is active and either producing epinephrine or primed to release it. When chinchillas are running, this is typically when they are outside of their burrows and foraging for food or running from predators. As you can imagine, over time, evolution has assisted them in heightening awareness so that **when a chinchilla runs or is running, adrenaline is pumping through their system. This can often feed into a panic response for a chinchilla even if they are just running on a wheel and cause them to attempt to run faster**, this is usually when they can lose their balance or fall and get flung across the cage. **If your chinchilla uses their wheel incessantly, you need to remove the wheel for their own safety as they are likely experiencing panic and feel the need to run. This is NOT an enjoyment of exercise response, but rather a hormonal fear triggering response that compounds with the running activity which will increase blood flow and delivery of epinephrine to the tissues of the body.** Does this mean that every single chinchilla will experience terror and panic when using a wheel or running? No, but it is a common response when you look at the physiology of chinchillas as a species. A good thing to consider is that not every animal will respond to stress in the same way...just as some dogs require medication for loud sounds like fireworks on the 4th of July, **many chinchillas are ill suited for running exercise and it should be avoided.**



Fight or flight? It's hormonal!

Maine Chinchilla Ranch ~ Boarding Agreement

Chinchilla Name	Number	Sex	Color	Date of Birth	Neutered?

Feeding

	Hay	Pellets	Other/Meds
Brand/type:			

Health

Past injuries, surgeries, or vet treatments: _____

Veterinarian's name & city _____

Is this chinchilla pregnant or been exposed to a male in the last 4 months? _____

Owner information:

Owner		Age	
Caregiver		Age	
Address			
Phone		Email:	

- I certify that I am the owner of or have the authority to board the animal(s) described above.
- I authorize the release of any veterinary records regarding the animal.
- I certify that to the best of my knowledge I have disclosed all information about the animal(s) concerning health, behavior, history and anything else that may affect it's stay.
- I understand that if I do not maintain contact with Maine Chinchilla Ranch or pay boarding fees, I relinquish ownership of my chinchilla(s) after 90 days.
- I understand that chinchillas can react unpredictably to changes in their environment and do not hold Maine Chinchilla Ranch LLC or Maine Chinchilla Shelter responsible for the death, illness, veterinary fees, or replacement of the animal during or after boarding.
- Boarding fee per cage is \$20 weekly, or \$80 monthly, payable in advance, and does not include veterinary care, medications, or toys.
- Owner authorizes MCR to test and treat for any illnesses or injury including strep, URI, or staph, and authorizes MCR to have these animals treated by a veterinarian if necessary:

Owner Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Begin Date	End Date	# cages	# weeks	\$ weekly	total due	amt paid	date paid

Chinchillas were returned to:

Printed Name	Signature	Date