



MARMOSET CARE

The Common Marmoset (*Callithrix jacchus*) originates from the forests of South America where it lives in large family groups of 4-15 monkeys. The groups are usually led by a dominant pair, and within the group only the dominant pair will breed. They make popular pets due to their intelligence and social nature, but can be unpredictable and aggressive as they mature. Despite this, they are one of the few primate species that can be kept without a licence. They are however, a big commitment and can live between 15-20 years if looked after correctly.

ACCOMMODATION

- Marmosets are very active and destructive animals so should be housed in a large indoor enclosure, ideally with outdoor access too.
- The enclosure should be sturdy, secure, made of non-toxic materials and easy to clean regularly. Natural materials such as wood-shavings or bark may be used on the floor but should be changed regularly.
- Indoor enclosures should be maintained at 18-24°C, and should be misted with water daily to maintain humidity
- It is important to provide a varied environment with branches, ropes or ladders for climbing, shelves for resting, and a nest box for hiding. In a group situation, several nest boxes should be provided to allow non-dominant animals separate hide areas.
- Environmental enrichment is of utmost importance in these intelligent primates, and cage furniture should be easy to move around or replace in order to provide a constantly stimulating habitat.
- If allowed out of their enclosure to exercise, do not forget a marmoset's curious nature. Prevent access to anything that can be chewed, eaten or destroyed and supervise these animals at all times.
- Lastly, but most important of all full spectrum ultraviolet light should be provided for all indoor enclosures, in order to prevent Metabolic Bone Disease.

COMPANIONS

- Primates are social animals, so will be happiest in a small group.

WHAT TO FEED

- In the wild, marmosets are omnivorous eating a varied diet. Fruit makes up the majority of their diet, but leaves, flowers and even small invertebrates will also be eaten.

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- In captivity, complete primate pellets can make up the majority of the diet, but small amounts of additional fruit, vegetables, acacia gum, and animal protein (in the form of invertebrates or eggs) should also be offered, and will provide good environmental enrichment.
- Metabolic bone disease is an important problem in marmosets, so additional Vitamin D3 should also be supplemented daily, and calcium supplements should be added to any invertebrates fed.
- If groups of marmosets are being kept it is important to provide multiple feeding and watering points within the enclosure to prevent fighting and uneven distribution of food.
- Food should be offered twice daily with the complete pellet part of the diet being offered in the morning, when marmosets will be most hungry.
- Water should always be freely available and changed daily.

SIGNS OF ILL HEALTH

- A healthy marmoset will be bright and alert with clear open eyes, ears and nostrils. Your marmoset should also be keen to eat and drink, and pass faeces regularly.
- It is important to become familiar with your marmoset's normal appearance, movement and behaviour, in order that signs of illness can be noticed at an early stage.
- You should look out for any changes in appetite or faeces passed, as well as changes in weight, behaviour, coat condition or breathing. Other signs of illness include discharges from the eyes, nose or mouth
- Bleeding or discharges from anywhere should be assessed by your vet
- Limping, change in grooming behaviour or wounds should be assessed by your vet.
- Metabolic bone disease is an important problem in captive marmosets – signs include lethargy, inappetance and problems with movement. It is usually due to a dietary problem or lack of appropriate ultraviolet light, and can be fatal. Prompt veterinary attention is therefore advised.
- Wasting marmoset syndrome is also a serious disease which can be fatal – signs include lethargy, weight loss and diarrhoea, and emergency veterinary treatment is generally necessary.
- If you have any concerns contact your vet as soon as possible