



Spot Cleaning:

It is recommended to spot clean a hamster's enclosure at least every three days. Every other day - every day spot cleaning is preferred. It is important to keep in mind that the size of the enclosure depends on how often you will need to clean it. Bigger enclosures will need to be cleaned out less often whereas smaller enclosures will need to be cleaned out more often.

When spot cleaning, look for areas that have lots of soiled bedding. Most hamsters choose one or two spots or corners of their enclosure to urinate. If your hamster chooses to urinate in their nests or burrows you will want to make sure they are fully awake before removing the soiled bedding. You also will want to attempt to keep your hamster's burrow intact when removing soiled bedding from them. It is very important to check a hamster's nests and/or burrows for soiled bedding as you do not want your hamster lying in or sleeping on soiled bedding. Many hamsters choose to urinate in their running wheels and sand baths. This can make spot cleaning very easy. However, some hamsters choose to urinate wherever they are, whenever they want. This can make spot cleaning a little bit more challenging but not impossible. One thing you can do is simply remove the top layer of bedding and replace it with fresh bedding. Another thing that you will want to do during spot cleaning is remove any large gatherings of poops in the hamster's enclosure. Hamsters tend to poop wherever they are when they need to so there will probably not be many large piles of poops in your hamster's enclosure. Do not feel the need to remove every single piece of poop in a hamster's enclosure as hamster poops are generally very hard and will not cause the hamster harm. Poop is also a territorial marker for hamsters and a way to orient themselves around their enclosure. Another thing to look for is any sand in the hamster's sand bath that is stuck together with urine.



To spot clean your hamster's enclosure, simply remove the soiled bedding and/or sand and large piles of poops and place them in a trash can. If you remove quite a lot of bedding or sand, be sure to place some fresh bedding or fresh sand in the enclosure or sand bath. You can use a dustpan or a plastic fork or spoon to help remove the soiled bedding and/or sand and large piles of poops. You can also use disposable gloves if you are not comfortable with touching the hamster urine or poop. It is important to wash your hands after spot cleaning so that you don't transfer any of the bacteria to your hamster which would defeat the entire purpose of spot cleaning.





HAMSTER CARE: ENCLOSURE CLEANING

You might also find a stash of food when spot cleaning. Hamsters are naturally food hoarders, so it is important not to remove or relocate any part of the food stash. Even if there's poop in the food stash, you still shouldn't touch it or even remove the poops as this is normal.



Finally, you will want to check your hamster's sand bath for any pieces of bedding or other substrates other than sand. These substrates will not harm your hamster however they may make it more difficult for your hamster to dig in or clean themselves with their sand bath. You can use your hands or a sifter to remove the non-sand substrates from their sand bath.



Regular Cleaning:

For enclosures with at least 450 sq in of floorspace, it is advised to clean out your hamster's enclosure no more than once a month. The most important thing about cleaning out your hamster's enclosure is to **not replace all of the bedding**. Half-cleans are recommended where you only replace half of the hamster's bedding. Studies have shown that when a hamster's enclosure is fully cleaned out with all of their bedding replaced and all surfaces scrubbed down that the hamster's heart rate increases, and it takes them almost an hour to calm back down. You can also decide to only clean out $\frac{1}{3}$ - $\frac{1}{4}$ of your hamster's enclosure instead of $\frac{1}{2}$ depending on the size of the enclosure, how often you spot clean, and if your hamster chooses to urinate in more than one place.

