



# HAMSTER CARE: SAND BATHS

Hamsters are considered to be very clean animals, and, like cats, they groom and clean themselves. As a result, hamster's coats have many natural oils that help their fur and skin stay healthy. Because of this, you should never bathe a hamster in water. Not only is this a very stressful and dangerous process for the hamster, but it also removes many natural oils from their coat that are very beneficial to the hamster's health.

Sand baths are a safe and easy alternative to bathing a hamster in water. Hamsters roll around in their sand baths to remove excess oils from their coat as well as eliminate any odors they might have. Some hamsters even like to dig in their sand bath for recreation and enrichment. See the "enrichment" section for more ways to enrich your hamster.



Providing a hamster with a sand bath is a quite easy thing to do. An old Tupperware or glass dish will work very well for a hamster sand bath. Many companies sell sand baths as well for fairly cheap prices.

Common  
Ceramic  
Dish



You can use several different types of sand for a hamster's sand bath. One option is Reptisand. Reptisand is a reptile sand that is animal-friendly and dust-free. This is the type of sand that GHR uses in all our hamster's sand baths. A cheaper option is children's play sand. Children's play sand can be found in large bags for very cheap prices. However, the important thing about using children's play sand, is that you must bake it in the oven at very high temperatures to remove any bacteria before putting it in your hamster's sand bath.





It is important to note that sand baths are safe for hamsters, but dust and powder baths are not. Things like Chinchilla dust and Critter Bath Powder are not suitable for a hamster's sand bath as hamsters have very small, sensitive lungs and dust or powder inhalation can lead to upper-respiratory infections, and eventually death.



You can also provide your hamster with other boxes of different substrates such as different hamster-safe wood shavings, Ecoearth, or other beddings to use as dig boxes and new textures. This will provide your hamster with great enrichment. See the "bedding" section for more options on hamster-safe substrates and the "enrichment" section for more ways to enrich your hamster.



All hamsters from GHR come with a sand bath and a full bag of sand, however, you will need to buy more sand throughout your hamster's life. It is very important to your hamster's well-being that you provide them with a safe sand bath.