

Guinea Pig Breeding

The single most important breeding consideration is that a female guinea pig must be bred before 7 months of age. Optimally they should be bred between 3 and 7 months of age. Males should be 3-4 months old at their first breeding. If the first breeding of the female occurs after 7 months of age, serious and sometimes life threatening problems with delivery are encountered. The separation of the pelvis does not develop in females that are bred for the first time after 7 months of age, creating an impossible and tragic situation. Delivery of the young is not possible and a cesarean section must be done to save the life of the sow and her babies.

Their heat cycle lasts 16 days. Pregnancy (gestation period) lasts 63-68 days. An uncomplicated delivery requires usually about 1/2 hour, with an average of 5 minutes between the delivery of each baby. Litter sizes range from 1 to 6. The young are born relatively mature. They are unusually large and fully furred, and can walk about. They also have teeth and open eyes. Even though newborns can eat solid food and drink water from a container, they should be allowed to nurse their mother for at least two weeks.