Healthy Diet for Pet Squirrels

Your squirrel needs a balanced diet containing the right amounts of protein, fat, vitamins and minerals. A healthy diet should include the following:

- Squirrel Blocks or Rodent Blocks
- A variety of healthy vegetables
- Wild foods from outside
- Limited nuts and treats

**SQUIRREL BLOCKS OR RODENT BLOCKS** provide essential vitamins, minerals, and protein.

Captive squirrels are much less active than wild animals, so they need a concentrated food such as Henry’s® Healthy Blocks or other quality rodent block. It’s the only way for your squirrel to get the nutrients he needs to stay healthy. A diet of nuts, seeds, and vegetables alone is deficient in calcium, protein, B vitamins, vitamin D, and other nutrients. This can cause dull or patchy fur and may lead to Metabolic Bone Disease (MBD), which is fatal in squirrels.

* Feed blocks according to directions: 2 Henry’s Healthy Blocks per day, or a small handful (around 50 g) of rodent blocks per day.

**HEALTHY VEGETABLES** provide fiber, fresh vitamin C, and micronutrients. Variety is key! Feed vegetables from Groups 1 and 2 freely. Feed vegetables from Group 3 in limited amounts (high in fats, starches, oxalates, or other compounds).

**Group 1: Vegetables**
- Arugula, bok choy, broccoli, brussels sprouts, cabbage (red or green), chayote, Chinese cabbage, cauliflower, mushrooms, purslane, watercress

**Group 2: Lettuces**
- Boston, bib, chicory, endive, escarole, iceburg, loose leaf, radicchio, romaine, etc.

**Group 3: Other**
- Artichokes, avocado, asparagus, carrots, celery, cilantro, cucumber, dandelion greens, fennel, corn (fresh), green beans, kale, parsley, radish, squash (all kinds), sugar snap peas, sweet potato, tomatoes

**Safe Trees:**
- Apple, aspen, birch, black walnut, bottlebrush, cherry, dogwood, hickory, locust, magnolia, maple, mulberry, oak, orange, palm,** pear, pine (3-needle and 5-needle pines), poplar, raintree, spruce, walnut

**Safe Plants:**
- Dandelion greens, hibiscus, lambsquarters, natal plum, lawn grass, plantain, purslane, red clover, rose hips, white clover, wood sorrel

**Safe Flowers:**
- Bottlebrush, camelia, carnations, chrysanthemum, daisies, marigold, moss rose, petunia, primrose, portulaca, roses, torenia, tulips/crocus (avoid other bulb flowers, like daffodils and lilies)

**Other:**
- Clean rocks, sea shells, antlers, or a clean box of dirt*** provide exercise, trace minerals, and help keep teeth worn down

**AVOID:**
- Bell peppers (red/green/yellow), eggplant, collard greens, okra, rhubarb, spinach, Swiss chard, turnips, white potatoes

Note: Do not feed any unfamiliar wild food, check to make sure it is not toxic. Gather items from areas that have not been sprayed with chemicals.

**Fruit:**
- Apple, apricot, banana, blackberries, blueberries, cantaloupe, cherries, crabapples, cranberries, grapefruit, grapes, honeydew, lemon, lime, mango, nectarine, orange, papaya, peach, pear, pineapple, pomegranate, raspberries, strawberries, watermelon

**Nuts/seeds:**
- Almonds, hazelnuts, pecans, peanuts,** pumpkin seeds, sesame seeds

**Insects:**
- Mealworms, crickets

**AVOID:**
- Chestnuts, Snack foods

**TOXIC:**
- Acorns†

**Exercise**
- Make sure your pet has daily out-of-cage time to run and play; a selection of branches and other things to climb and explore; and at least one active play session per day. This will help keep your squirrel healthy and happy.

**Maintaining a Healthy Weight**
- Being overweight causes many health problems and can lead to diabetes, especially in older animals. Healthy weights may vary, but in general, your squirrel should look sleek and well muscled and not have rolls of fat. If your squirrel is older, overweight, or less active, avoid foods that are high in sugars, starches, or fat.

**TIPS:** Vegetables may be fed fresh, frozen, or lightly cooked. Avoid canned. Wash all vegetables before feeding. Some seeds and pits can be toxic.

**WILD FOODS** provide extra nutrients, amusement, exercise, and help keep teeth worn down.

**TOXIC:**
- Acorns****
- Wild mushrooms
- Cardboard palm
- Sago palm
- All members of the cycad palm family
- Florist flowers†

**AVOID:**
- Bell peppers (red/green/yellow), eggplant, collard greens, okra, rhubarb, spinach, Swiss chard, turnips, white potatoes

Note: Before feeding any unfamiliar wild food, check to make sure it is not toxic. Gather items from areas that have not been sprayed with chemicals. Wash before feeding.

**TREATS** are fun and can help with bonding, but should always be fed in small amounts after healthy foods have been eaten.

**Fruit:**
- Apple, apricot, banana, blackberries, blueberries, cantaloupe, cherries, crabapples, cranberries, grapefruit, grapes, honeydew, lemon, lime, mango, nectarine, orange, papaya, peach, pear, pineapple, pomegranate, raspberries, strawberries, watermelon

**Nuts/seeds:**
- Almonds, hazelnuts, pecans, peanuts, pumpkin seeds, sesame seeds

**Insects:**
- Mealworms, crickets

**AVOID:**
- Chestnuts, Snack foods

**TOXIC:**
- Acorns†

* Feed all parts: leaves, branches, buds, flowers, seeds/cones. ** Certain palms (cycad family) are highly toxic. *** Do not use bagged potting soil. Dirt may be sterilized by baking in a 250 degree oven for 30 minutes. Avoid dirt from areas where raccoons frequent, as their feces contain a deadly parasite. **** Acorns can contain aflatoxin, a deadly poison. It is impossible to detect which acorns may be affected. † Florist flowers may be dyed or treated with pesticides or other chemicals.

Note: Be careful with wild-caught insects as they can harbor parasites. † Acorns can contain aflatoxin, a deadly poison. It is impossible to detect which acorns may be affected.

**ALSO IMPORTANT FOR GOOD HEALTH:**

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HHP1402001