

MINIPIGS4SALE

# Caring for Your Piglet

---

Helpful Information & Suggestions for Successful  
Training, Health, and Care for Your Pet Pig

**Barbara Dunham**

**4/23/2014**

## Caring for Your Baby Piglet

It's normal for a piglet, that has been taken from familiar surroundings, to be shy and easily frightened, but its fear will subside and it will begin to bond with its new family quickly. Listed below are a few helpful hints to keep your piglet healthy and safe.

- Keep the piglet away from drafts to avoid respiratory problems caused by colds.
- Handle and talk to your piglet often and to build trust and she will want to be around you in just a short time.
- The piglet will need a pet bed and a blanket, heavy ceramic bowls for food & water so they don't tip over easily.
- He is sleeping through the night, but will still need a litter box during the night.
- Have fresh water available for him at all times.
- **He is eating and drinking from a bowl 3 times a day**

## Feeding

An 8 week old piglet should be weaned eating Mini Pig food, twice a day, with a lunch of vegetables or fruit. How much of the Mini Pig Food should you feed? A mature pig of 25 lbs. should be fed ½ cup of food morning and again in the evening. Remember, the pellets will swell in the stomach giving a feeling of fullness. Start with 1/8 of a cup of food twice a day. Mini Pig Food has everything that a miniature pig needs to be healthy. Supplementing with vegetables and fruit adds variety to the diet.

Be vigilant of his diet to keep him within his projected mature weight. Giving too many treats or overfeeding will only lead to problems with his vision, back, legs, feet, and general health.

You are the best judge of your piglet's metabolism. An active pig may need a little more food than a less active pig. Increase his feed as needed. You can judge how much to feed your piglet by looking at the size of his stomach. If the piglet's stomach looks like a basketball, he's getting too much food and if it looks sunken in, you know the piglet needs a little more.

If the piglet seems hungry between feedings give him small bits of apple, banana, raisins, 2% milk, dark leafy vegetables, or Cheerios as a snack. He can have hay or let him graze on grass for fiber also. He will need to have fresh water available throughout the day.

### **Potty Training**

Your piglet has started using a litter box. He is used to plain, clay litter. If you use the clumping or scented kind, watch him to see if he is trying to eat it. If he is, discontinue and fill his litter box with about 2 inches of plain, clay litter. Add a little baking soda to take care of any odor.

Continue his potty training by placing the litter box in the back of a training crate, a 4'x4' enclosed area, or an old baby play pen away from his bedding and food. Give him about 30 minutes after meals to "go potty" and when he wakes up from a nap. Let him out of his "area" to play & explore for 30-45 minutes at a time. Take him back to his litter box after each playtime. While he is out of his "area" place his litter pan where he will be playing if in another room or outside of his playpen, in case he needs to go before you put him back.

You can expand his time out of his "area" as he gets older and let him have more of the house to roam in until you are satisfied that he will use his litter box no matter where he is in the house. Don't give rewards for going potty. He will soon learn that he will get a treat for it and pretend to go.

If he has accidents, resume his training, but reducing his "area" or by letting him spend more time in his play pen with his litter box handy. Then give him more space until you are satisfied that he is trained.

My website has more information on potty training as well as other topics concerning care, feeding and grooming.

### **Some Don'ts to be Aware of**

1. Don't let the piglet self-feed. Pigs don't know when they have had enough to eat. Overfeeding can cause serious health problems.
2. Don't let the piglet eat dog or cat food. Mini Pig Feed is especially made to provide all the nutrients and minerals that the toy teacup or micro mini pig will need to be healthy. Supplement with vegetables and no more than 2 fruits a day for an adult pig. He can also have a chewable or gummy children's vitamin daily.
3. Don't feed him farm pig feed. This will fatten him just like the farm pigs that it is intended for. Guard his diet and be vigilant in what he eats. A pig with fat folds over its eyes has a problem seeing. Extra weight will hurt his back, legs, feet and heart.
4. Although it's tempting, don't give table scraps. He will remember and beg at the table whenever you are eating. It's best to avoid this bad habit.
5. Don't give him sweet, salty, fatty, greasy foods. He can have cut apples and bananas to give a variety to his diet. Limit him to only 2 fruits a day when he is an adult.
6. Don't give him grapes. This is something I have added since a person that I know told me that her piglet was fed grapes one day and died the next. He had not been sick, but started vomiting the second day. Grapes are just the right size to be a choking hazard and can block the stomach and intestines of the young pig. To be safe, I recommend waiting until your piglet is grown to add grapes to his diet.

### **Know When Your Pig is Sick**

Micro Mini & Toy Teacup Pigs are hardy animals with few health problems. One thing to be aware of is they are prone to respiratory problems, especially in cold weather.

## **Signs of a Sick Pig:**

Look your pig over every day and be aware of any changes in his appearance or temperament. Know when you should take your pig to the vet.

Seek Veterinary assistance if your pig shows any of these symptoms:

1. The pig won't eat. A pig that will not eat is a sick pig.
2. It is listless and won't get up
3. It stands with its back hunched and head down
4. It has diarrhea. Bowl movements should be small black balls. If it is watery or yellow then the piglet will need medical treatment as soon as possible.
5. Panting or trouble breathing
6. Temperature over 101 degrees F.
7. Staggering

We all think we know our pigs better than anyone else, but it is important to remember most of us are not medical professionals. If you are uncertain of how to treat your pig's medical needs or if you have any questions, you should contact your veterinarian immediately. Listed below is some important information to keep in mind with the arrival of summer:

1. Your pig may be bitten by insects. If your pig is bitten or stung, remove the stinger and watch the site for an allergic reaction. If allergic reactions occur or if there have been multiple wasp, bee or mosquito bites, take your pig to the vet.
2. Check your pig daily for fleas and ticks. Older pigs have a tough skin and usually don't have fleas or ticks, but young piglets can have them if they are in an area where these pests are. See de-worming section. Most products used to de-worm a pig will also take care of parasites on the skin.
3. Most lawn and garden products may be hazardous. Make sure that plants and fertilizers within your pig's reach are not toxic. This includes the products you use on your lawn.
4. Your piglet received a porcine CDT vaccination on April 25, 2014... Even pet pigs are susceptible to swine diseases. It's a good idea to update this vaccination annually.
5. No matter how careful and responsible you may be, accidents can happen. Make sure Animal Poison Control and your vet's phone numbers are close at hand and available to all family members.

## **De-Worming Your Piglet**

You will need to de-worm your piglet regularly every 3-4 months. You can do it yourself with Ivermectin paste (sold for horses). Squeeze an amount about the size of an English pea onto his food just once, every 3-4 months. This will take care of any parasite on the inside and outside of your piglet. There are other products available that you can use or have your vet take care of it.

## **Bathing Your Piglet**

There are products for bathing a piglet, but I prefer baby shampoo or Ultra Pig Shampoo for the pink/white piglets. Run about 2 inches of warm water into the tub with a mat in the bottom of it. Sprinkle a few Cheerios in the tub and then with a glass dribble water on the piglet. Lather the piglet and rinse. Piglets will get used to being bathed. Warm a towel to dry the piglet with. I don't know why, but most piglets don't like the idea of drying off with a towel, that why I prefer to use a warm one to reduce their discomfort.

## **Dry Skin**

Dry skin is not unusual in pigs, especially in the winter months, but you can rub hand lotion or baby oil on her to take care of it. Also, if the piglet will be out in the sunshine for a lengthy time, remember to put sun screen on his back, ears and head. When outdoors in the hot summer months, pigs enjoy a kiddie pool to keep cool.

- A pig that is outside in the heat of summer has no way to dissipate the extra heat from his body except by submersing himself in water. Therefore, all pigs that are kept outside for an extended period of time should be provided a wading pool of clean water. It is recommended that the water in this pool be changed frequently.
- A pig kept in the house should have their bed placed well away from drafts caused by air conditioning. Also, pigs that live under air conditioning will need a blanket or sheet to snuggle up with. Your pig's outdoor area should have shade and shelter to provide a place to rest comfortably.
- Never leave a pig in your vehicle. Heatstroke can occur in minutes. Heatstroke can lead to brain damage or death. Signs of heatstroke are rapid excessive breathing with mouth open, rapid pulse, and fever. To cool your pig immediately stand him in cool water. Only cool from the feet up. Do not pour water over your pig's head or body. This may cause your pig to go into shock. Seek immediate emergency veterinary assistance.

- Always make sure your pig has access to fresh water. Remember to avoid exercise with your pig on extremely hot days and completely refrain from physical activity when the sun's heat is most intense.

### **Rooting**

Rooting is a natural instinct, especially for young piglets. It's a comforting mechanism that is left over from their suckling days with mom. But as they mature, you would not want your yard ruined by rooting. To prevent pigs over 4 months old from rooting in the yard, give them Selenium with vitamin E in a pellet form. I purchase it online at [healthypigs.com](http://healthypigs.com) but there are other sites and local feed stores that it is available from also. Put a capful according to his weight (there is a chart in the instructions) on food each morning and he will not root and will have a healthy coat too.

### **Discipline (Very Important)**

These brief suggestions are just the beginning of understanding your piglet. I encourage you to gather information about your piglet by observation, asking questions, and seeking out experienced advice from qualified breeders, vets, and other pig parents.

The training and discipline of your pig are your responsibility. This responsibility is not to be taken lightly. Having a miniature pig in the house is like having a 3 year old child in a pig suit! Your pig is never too young to begin his training. From the very beginning, he must understand the parameters of acceptable behavior, and be corrected if he doesn't mind you.

Pigs are hierarchical by nature, thus the owner must always be in charge. You are the LEADER. Your pig should be taught from the first moment he enters your home that ALL HUMANS, in all circumstances, are to be respected and never challenged. Never underestimate your pig and always establish yourself as "top pig". Your pig, who is a living, intelligent and loving creature, is totally dependent on you to give him the home and training he deserves.

To help him to live a long and healthy life; the following are several considerations.

#### **DO**

- Provide him with companion animals and a broad life experience with other people and environments.
- Provide him with appropriate responses to what he is doing or saying.
- Learn how a pig thinks and how to "Talk Pig".

- Provide him with adequate activities including time outside, toys, and a place to just be himself.
- Provide him with the respect he deserves, being the fifth most intelligent creature on earth.
- Provide him with good parenting skills including unbending rules, loving, educational discipline, and realistic boundaries.

### **DON'T**

- Assume he can happily live alone and cloistered.
- Assume he does not have his own way of communicating.
- Assume he is passive and needs no stimulation.
- Assume he is not intelligent.
- Assume he does not need to be trained with rules to follow.

If a pig displays a behavior that you do not approve of, you must discipline him immediately. The severity of your reprimand should be commensurate with the severity of the pig's misbehavior. In other words, if your pig sneaks a bagel that you stupidly left on the low coffee table, a sharp "no", "bad pig", or whatever your normal negative words are is suitable. If your pig tries to bite your hand as you are offering a training treat, a much more severe punishment is indicated, like a bold push with your foot on the pig's shoulder as you loudly shout "Knock It Off", "Bad Pig", or "NO". I recommend this technique because when pig's fight, they face each other and push at the shoulder. Most pigs are truly shocked and surprised to find themselves on the floor. They literally don't know what hit them and this is good. The quickness and surprise of your physical reprimand is very effective.

After such a scolding, it is important to place the pig in a *time out* situation. Escort him to his room. Using a mean tone of voice, tell him that he was a very bad boy and this is not the kind of behavior you will accept from him. Isolate him from the rest of the family for 15 to 30 minutes. When this time has elapsed, go back to your pig and quietly talk to him. See if he is remorseful. I think no touching is good here as well as no food treats. Just talk quietly and get a feel for if your pig is truly sorry for his bad conduct. If he displays the bad behavior again, repeat the shoulder push and loud verbal reprimand, leave his area, slamming the door and start another time out session. When your pig is back to normal and acting according to the prescribed house rules, let him out of his room to resume his normal activities.

It is good to avoid too many extra food treats and exposure to other people during this type of behavior training. Be consistent with your words and actions so the pig understands what is expected of him.

## Poisons

Be aware of the plants you have in your house and in your pig's yard. The ingestion of azalea, oleander, mistletoe, sago palm, or yew plant material, by a pig, could be fatal.

When cleaning your house, never allow your pig access to the area where cleaning agents are used or stored. Cleaning agents have a variety of properties. Some may only cause a mild stomach upset, while others could cause severe burns of the snout, tongue, mouth, and stomach.

When using rat or mouse baits, ant or roach traps, or snail and slug baits, place the products in areas that are inaccessible to your pig. Most baits contain sweet smelling inert ingredients, such as jelly, peanut butter, and sugars, which can be very attractive to your pig.

Never give your pig any medications unless under the directions of veterinarian. Many medications that are used safely in humans can be deadly when used inappropriately.

Keep all prescription and over the counter drugs out of reach of your pig, preferably in locked cabinets. Pain killers, cold medicines, anti-cancer drugs, antidepressants, vitamins, and diet pills are common examples of human medication that could be potentially lethal even in small dosages. A few extra strength acetaminophen tablets (500 mg) could cause liver damage to a 30 pound pig.

Many common household items have been shown to be lethal in pigs. Miscellaneous items that are highly toxic even in low quantities include pennies (high concentration of zinc), mothballs (contain naphthalene or paradichlorobenzene - even a few can be life threatening), potpourri oils, fabric softener sheets, salt (porcine has been reported to be the most sensitive species effected by salt toxicity) automatic dish detergents (contain cationic detergents which could cause corrosive lesions), batteries (contain acids or alkali which can also cause corrosive lesions), homemade play dough (contains high quantity of salt), winter heat source agents like hand or foot warmers (contain high levels of iron), cigarettes, coffee grounds, and alcoholic drinks.

All automotive products such as oil, gasoline, windshield washer fluid, and antifreeze, should be stored in areas away from pig access.

When treating your lawn or garden with fertilizers, herbicides, or insecticides, always keep your pig away from the sprayed area until the area dries completely. Discuss usage of products with the manufacturer of the products before usage. Always store such products in areas that will ensure no possible pig exposure.

Never discard old medications, spoiled foods, or chemicals in a garbage can that is accessible to your pig. Garbage is very attracting to pigs ---the smellier the better in most cases. Unwanted medications could be flushed down the toilet in order to prevent

pig exposure. Never allow your pig to ingest moldy or rotten foods. Certain types of mold grown on food can produce nervous system signs in pigs. Spoiled food can carry pathogenic bacteria that can cause severe stomach upset in your pig.

## **At Home First Aid Kit for Your Pig**

### **Items Needed:**

Your veterinarian's phone number

Thermometer (Small for children or babies) Digital or rectal

Stethoscope (Know the parts of the body, where you can get a pulse)

Betadine (to scrub cuts, scrapes or injection sites)

Needles & Syringes (Note the sizes of the pig for needle size and most frequent syringe size is 3 cc or 10 cc)

Small Flashlight (in case you have to look into a cut deeply)

Tweezers (in case there is something stuck in the cut or scrape)

Q-Tips (mainly for ears, eyes and applying in small cuts)

Gauze 2 x 2 or 4 x 4 squares (for packing if bleeding severely)

### **Ointments & Topical**

Vaseline, Triple antibiotic Ointment, Bag Balm or Neosporin

Ask your vet, he may recommend a topical with antibiotic

Baby aspirin has many uses in a variety of things for the miniature pig.

Make sure that you follow the direction of your veterinarian and do not overdose.

Dosage by weight only.

### **Liquids**

Pepto Bismol, Mylanta, Benadryl (flavored) for children), Cranberry Juice Pedialyte, Gatorade, electrolytes, and always have Sterile water available for ingestion

### **For Young Piglets**

Any of the above will work for piglets with much smaller dosage, but also have on hand from your KITCHEN the following:

Yogurt, ice pops, cottage cheese, applesauce, Jell-O water, juices, (Especially Cranberry or Cranberry Grape/Apple, baby RICE cereal

If you have done your research beforehand you will 99.9% of the time never use your "At home First Aid Kit" unless it is an EMERGENCY.

My website goes into much more detail on several topics important to successful Toy Teacup and Mini Pig ownership; **MiniPigs4Sale.com**