

Suffield Veterinary Hospital May 2017 Patient of the Month

Meet Khaleese, the cute white chinchilla on the left in this darling photo taken by our veterinary technician, Jennifer Haire. Scott Hersey and his family of Easthampton, MA purchased her at Dave's Pet Food City in Agawam to be a companion to Bella, the girl on the right. Bella and Khaleese are now inseparable. They come out of their cage for an hour a day to play around the house. They like to jump all over people and climb anything they can. When not exploring the house, they live in a cage the size of refrigerator with a big wheel in which they love to run. They have lots of toys and are definitely spoiled!



Chinchillas are a popular pet rodent that originated in the Andes Mountains of South America, where they live in rock crevices. They can live 10-20 years, so having them as members of your household requires a long term commitment. They are clean, odorless and social animals with personalities similar to a park squirrel. They are very athletic with long hind legs and can leap up to 6 feet. If not handled as babies, they tend to be high strung and thus not suitable to be a pet for young children. They need roomy vertical cages to jump around, boxes to hide in, exercise wheels to run on and plenty of wood to chew on. They clean their luxurious fur by taking baths in special dust instead of water.

Khaleese was first brought to Suffield Veterinary hospital to see Dr. Sabellico for dental problems three years ago. Chinchilla teeth can grow up to 10 inches per year! They need to eat a diet high in fiber which includes something such as hay, which is abrasive and helps to wear down their teeth and keep them properly aligned. Tooth apposition problems are relatively common, which may be due to genetics or a mineral-deficient diet. Khaleese has a condition known as Slobbers. Her teeth do not line up properly and overgrow, causing her to drool and lose weight. Her conscientious owners bring her in regularly so her teeth can be trimmed and filed. Bella, the gray one, has a normal set of teeth and always accompanies Khaleese to provide moral support when she comes in for her monthly appointment.

Mr. Hersey tells us Khaleese is a happy girl despite her dental problems. They try to keep Khaleese chewing and they stay positive for more progress. For giving us a chance to highlight chinchillas as pets, and to honor the Hersey family for their commitment to keeping Khaleese healthy despite her crooked mouth, we are pleased to name Khaleese the May 2017 Suffield Veterinary Hospital Patient of the Month.

Suffield Veterinary Hospital

Dr. Ann Huntington ❖ Dr. Anita Sabellico ❖ Dr. Dawn Burke

❖ Dr. Griffin O'Connor ❖ Dr. Daniel Rothbart

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