

# Safely Showing Your Cavy

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Recently at a local show, I was made aware of several accidents with cavies that could have been prevented. Maybe one or two of the tips I'm going to pass will be helpful or perhaps they'll be a reminder. Hopefully they will help make your show experiences safer.

A week before the first show, I pull all of my carriers out of the garage where they are stored. The food dishes and water bottles are removed and sterilized. I use 1/4 cup of bleach in about 2 gallons of hot water. Carriers are completely emptied of any debris and wiped out with the same solution. This is also when I carefully check every clip, spring, and divider. Cavies have been known to find loose dividers and strangle when trying to escape their compartment. Be sure not to put juniors into a compartment with a divider high enough for them to get their heads under.

Cavies may do fine together in larger cages, but become stressed in smaller compartments. They may fight, causing injuries, lost ear tags, or pull out patches of fur. I have seen one who ended up with a chewed coat and was not able to be shown. I find it easier to give each one their own space.

Hydration is very important in cavies. It helps prevent stress and weight loss. When a cavy is right at the class division weight they need to maintain hydration. Having veggies or water bottles in with them can prevent a disqualification at the show table.

Have the bottoms of your carriers covered with some type of bedding. This keeps your Cavies comfortable, dry, and clean. I also add some hay as it keeps my cavies busy chewing. Some people attach small cavy toys to their carriers. A busy cavy isn't stressing.

Cover your carriers to prevent drafts when carrying them to and from your vehicle. Be sure the material of your covers allows the cavies to breathe. Don't pack your carriers so tightly that air can't flow around them. Be very sure not to place your carriers in front of eat or air conditioning vents. Cavies can over heat at around 80 degrees Fahrenheit. Drafts can help cause diseases.

When showing during the warmer months, I've learned to carry a cooler filled with 2 litter soda bottles filled with ice. I lay those besides the carriers to help keep my cavies cool. I've seen people run and buy a cold can of soda to place into a carrier to cool off a distressed cavy. I try not to handle my cavies any more than I have to during hot shows. Less handling seems to keep them more comfortable.

When traveling with our cavies, I make it a rule not to subject my cavies to long stops where the car interior can heat up. If I must stop, I try to park in the shade, put my windows partially down, and get back to them as soon as possible. Even a half hour can be dangerous to them. Always be sure the sun doesn't shine directly on your cavies. A light weight white sheet over the top of your carriers will help prevent this.

I carry a small Cavy First Aid kit to shows. It contains scissors, bounce back or Gatorade, and a syringe to feed it to a cavy if needed. Corn starch is great for staunching bleeding if I clip a toe nail too closely. I have gauze pads, tap, band aids, and bag balm. I find these items help me deal with most emergencies I or others encounter.

Cavy carriers need a flat bottom. Wire bottoms as in rabbit carriers can cause injuries as a cavy's smaller legs get caught in the mesh. If you need to use a mesh bottom for a one time transfer, cut stiff cardboard and completely cover the wire. Straw or hay bedding won't work well.

I tend to keep my carriers covered during most shows. This prevents drafts, [plus it discourages children from poking fingers into cages. Germs are easily spread, so I keep a small bottle of hand cleanser nearby. If the show room is very warm, covers are off.

Hopefully, there's been a helpful hint in this article for you. Maybe you have discovered a better way of doing something that works for you. Pass your tips along by posting them on a cavy group message board, a club newsletter, or an article. I know I am always open to suggestions and looking for easier ways to help keep my cavies safe and healthy.

