

Rules and Guidelines for Health Check Personnel

Training as a Health Check Person:

A member of DMK must have passed the theoretical health check exam to be accepted as a health check trainee.

The trainee must attend health checks under the supervision of experienced health check personnel several times before being allowed to work independently. A logbook (provided by the health check coordinator) must be kept for each health check and signed by the supervising health check person. Based on this logbook and conversations with the experienced personnel, the DMK health check coordinator will decide when the trainee is qualified to be approved as a health check person.

As an alternative to participating in health checks at exhibitions, so-called **pre-health check days** can be utilized, where exhibition organizers invite new members to a health check well before an event. These sessions are ideal for observing a wide range of conditions, as many contagious diseases can be detected here and therefore not at the actual exhibition health check. Trainees are encouraged to actively attend these events to expedite their training process.

Rules for Health Check Personnel During Health Checks:

One must act respectfully and kindly toward exhibitors and always prioritize the guinea pigs' safety during handling.

A health check person must always seek advice from another health check person in cases of doubt. This ensures mistakes are avoided.

If an **entire household is to be rejected**, three health check personnel must be present, assess the animal(s), and agree on the rejection. If no agreement is reached, the majority decision prevails.

If a judge observes something during the evaluation that could be grounds for rejection, two other trained health check personnel must be called in to help assess whether the individual animal or the entire household should be rejected.

Regarding long-haired guinea pigs: If the health check person cannot adequately assess the guinea pig while it is wrapped (by inspecting partings and other visible areas), they may ask the exhibitor to unwrap the animal. It is especially important not to damage the coat during the health check (e.g., feet can get caught in the wrappings if the animal is handled in a way that causes it to kick).

Rejection Guidelines:

REMEMBER: No diagnosis or treatment is to be given during the health check — only a veterinarian is authorized to do so. Rejections are based on **suspicion** of illness, and the owner is advised to consult a veterinarian for diagnosis and treatment.

Additionally, the club's brochure on rejections — explaining what it means and what to do next — must be handed out, along with the club's informational material on guinea pig parasites.

The following findings will result in individual animal rejection:

- Lip fungus (crusts and/or thickening of the lip cleft or lips)
- Pregnancy

- Fresh, bleeding wounds
- Infected (red/warm/swollen) and/or pus-filled wounds
 - Only healing wounds are acceptable, meaning with scabs and no redness, warmth, swelling, pus, or blood
- Abscesses, including puberty-related abscesses
- A malnourished/emaciated animal
- Discharge from eyes or nose
- Labored breathing
- Signs of diarrhea

The following findings will result in rejection of the entire household:

- **Signs of mange:** usually a combination of hair loss, small wounds, red and irritated skin, and dandruff. Typically found on the back, shoulders, groin, and under the front legs. If only hair loss is present without wounds or irritated skin, the animal is not rejected, as hair loss can result from non-contagious causes (wear, scarring, hormonal issues).
- **Signs of ringworm or other fungal infections:** typically whitish, scaly areas on the face, ears, shoulders, and feet
- **Presence of lice and/or lice eggs:** Lice eggs are most easily seen as small white dots around the ear base or nipples
- **Multiple animals with symptoms** that would individually warrant rejection (e.g., several with diarrhea, eye/nose discharge), as this may indicate a contagious disease within the group

Young animals: If there are young guinea pigs under 300 g — DMK's minimum weight for selling young guinea pigs — they are to be placed in the quarantine area. If this happens repeatedly, or if any are under 275 g, the exhibition management must be contacted, and the owner will receive a written warning.

Rules for Holding the Role of Health Check Person:

- One must have completed DMK's health check training and be approved by the health check coordinator.
- One must be at least 18 years old to serve as a health check person.
- One must perform at least one full health check per year, otherwise, the role will be revoked (this does not apply to trained judges).
- The role may be revoked if the person shows negligence.
- Anyone not fulfilling the role to full satisfaction may be dismissed by unanimous decision of the board.

Approved by DMK's Main Board, May 2025