

# the Shelter Guide

Written by Mini Pig Info Team

## Our Promise

We promise to help you understand pigs and their behaviors. Our promise to you includes being available to answer questions and have information available to you on our inclusive pig education website.

Our goal is to help you care for pigs in your care and also to understand common behaviors/sounds and to help you understand the most misunderstood pet out there....the pig.

Please feel free to reach out to us for any questions with regards to the guide we have created for your use.



Our website, [www.minipiginfo.com](http://www.minipiginfo.com) is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The information posted to our website is accurate, credible and everything you need to know about the proper care and well being of pigs typically seen as pets. Please use the website as a reference or to help guide you on your path to learning as much as you want about pigs.

## **Sus scrofa domesticus**

PIG  
LIVESTOCK

PET PIG  
SWINE

PORCINE  
DOMESTIC PIG



## Purpose and Mission

**Mini Pigs have become quite the popular pet over the last 20 years, however, there aren't a lot of people that are equipped to care for them, as they should be, resulting in unwanted and uncared for pigs.**

**Often times, these pigs end up in animal shelters and the caregivers there aren't familiar with pigs, therefore, aren't able to care for them appropriately. This isn't meant to place blame on anyone for not knowing, only to serve as an educational guide. This guide is for those shelters who get pigs in so they're able to understand how to care for these pigs, appropriate diets, appropriate socialization, enrichment, general health, personal interactions and more importantly, how to appropriately screen for good homes. Use this guide as a reference tool to help these pigs find homes that are "pig appropriate" ....**



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## Section 1: What is a “mini” pig?

Mini is a general term used to distinguish the difference between smaller breeds of pigs and their cousins, the farm pig. Mini itself is NOT a breed of pigs, but a classification of pigs. There are several “breeds” that fit into this classification including the Potbellied pig, KuneKune, Juliana (although many say this isn’t an actual breed) and mixed breed pigs. (Which is what most are nowadays).

There are NO such breeds as “teacup” or “micro”. “dandie” or “micro mini”. These are ALL marketing terms to entice people to buy from particular breeders. Unfortunately, these are also the most common reasons why we see pigs needing new homes, 95% grow much larger than expected when there are unrealistic expectations of a fully-grown 20 pound pig. Most people who buy a pig for their small size are not only disappointed, but some aren’t able to accommodate a much bigger pet pig.

If someone is surrendering a pig to the shelter you work at, please get as much information as possible. Age, sex, spayed/neutered, temperament, good with children, other animals, reason why this pig is being surrendered, has there ever been any vet care, parasite control, vaccinations? Basic questions, much the same that would be asked for other types of pets.

Mini pigs can make GREAT family pets when given the right home to thrive in. They should NOT be housed in apartments or homes with no yard as pigs need to “root” and be a pig. This will be discussed in much greater detail in the “how to screen potential adoptive families” section.

Mini should NOT be confused with the actual size of a pig and that term alone can be misleading because most mini pigs are anything but “mini”.



## Breeds

### Vietnamese Potbelly Pig/Potbellied Pig

Mini pig and potbellied pig have become interchangeable in recent years although that is not the actual name of the breed. They were originally brought into Sweden and Canada and have since moved into a number of countries. Full grown potbellied pigs weigh an average of 70-150 lb. with some reaching 200 lb. or more; they average 3-ft. long and 15-inches tall. Full growth is not reached until about 3-5 years of age. Colors range from solid black to solid white, with a variety of colors or spots in between. These pigs are, by far, the most common "pet pig" seen. Most are a mix of some kind because the original breeding stock brought to the USA are long gone and these pigs have been cross-bred, inbred and bred with other breeds of pigs. However, they are still considered potbellied pigs.



Potbellied pigs typically have a "potbelly", erect ears and all have hair. This hair falls out once, sometimes twice a year during the annual (or biannual) blowing of the coat. Pigs aren't known for their keen sight, as a matter of fact, pigs do NOT have great vision and because pigs are food motivated animals, often times obesity leads to "fat blindness" and strips them of their ability to see. Arthritis is commonly seen in obese potbellied pigs due to excessive weight. They typically have short legs, snouts can be super short or longer, eyes are wide-set and they have a thick neck (as they age) with a dip in the middle of the back and their hind end is typically rounded. You should NOT be able to see the bone structure but you should be able to easily feel the hip bones with firm pressure. Pigs are prey animals therefore, easily startled. Combined with their poor vision, these pigs are often misunderstood as aggressive when they're actually only frightened.

### KuneKune Pig

Kunekune pigs are relatively small in comparison to farm pigs and highly distinctive, characterized physically by a short-legged, dumpy build, pot tummy, short upturned nose, and a generally fat, roundabout appearance. (The Polynesian word 'kunekune' simply means 'plump'.) A unique feature of the kunekune are the pike (tassels) hanging from their lower jaw (about 4 cm long). But not all purebreds have tassels. Their legs are short and their bodies are short and round. The color range includes: Black, black and white, white, gold, tan and brown. Weights for this breed of pigs can exceed 200+ pounds and still be within the healthy range. Temperament-wise they are delightful, being placid, very friendly, and easy to maintain. They thrive on human company, and are extremely popular as pets.







## Guinea Hogs (Pygmy hog)

Today's Guinea hogs are small, only 150-300 pounds and 15-20 inches tall when fully grown. They are usually black and often hairy. Guinea hogs are very gentle and easy to care for, making them popular at children's zoos, though, unfortunately, they remain as a choice for small scale pork production. Investigations are continuing into the relationship between modern and historically documented Guinea hogs. These pigs aren't actually in the mini breed class, but because people don't know, they are often sold as "mini pigs". These pigs are said to have a friendly disposition, but bigger than the potbellied pig. They're typically taller and longer with more of a proportionate body versus a potbelly.

## Juliana Pig

Lean and muscular the Juliana pig should never look round or flabby. The top line should be straight and of good length. Chest and shoulders should be of medium width, neither broad nor narrow. A slight sway in the back may be seen. Belly should be lean and firm. A slight roundness in the belly is possible, but there should not be a "Potbelly" present.

Always spotted the base color can be silver, white, red, rust, black, or cream. Spots are generally black but can also be red or white. Spotting should be profuse and random, not in a piebald pattern. Spotting may fade or blend in as the hair coat gets longer, but pigmentation on the skin must be visible when washed or shaved. Hair coat is coarse, thick and may be quite long in the winter.



## Yucatan Pig (Mexican hairless pig)

Yucatan pigs originated in Mexico and Central America. They are slate gray to black in color with very sparse hair to completely bald. They have straight backs and bellies, short snouts and medium sized ears. Their temperament is very gentle. Because their skin and body systems are similar to humans, they are often the pig of choice for laboratories. Normally their size can range up to 210 lbs, but laboratories have bred them even smaller with weights ranging from 50 to 100 lbs. This breed of pig isn't commonly seen or as common as some of the others as pet pigs.

## Feral pigs/Wild Pigs



Wild boar had been spotted all across the US as well as other areas of the world, and they are unusual in that many of them are active in the daytime (diurnal), some of the boar that others have come across also dispel the myth that all boar are scared of humans, there is an increasing number that are happy to casually trundle up to people, often in search of food. There are people who have feral pigs as pets and have been able to train them much like more domesticated pigs to act as a pet. Both female and male feral pigs have tusks (as do every other breed), although they usually only protrude from the mouth in older animals. Feral/feral mixes are often advertised as "chipmunk" or striped pigs.

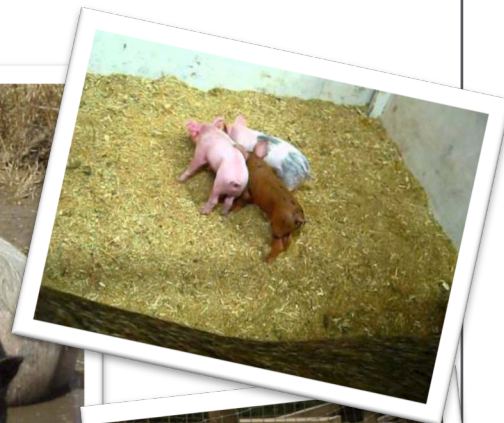
The main differences we usually see are the longer, narrower snout and longer leaner bodies. The coloring can also be "chipmunk" or striped colors, however, this color usually fades away leaving a solid brownish color in its place after several months. As beautiful as they are, these are not pigs you would want to reach out and pet. These pigs are wild and therefore need to be respected in their environment.

Feral pigs should NOT be approached unprepared. Mothers will attack to protect their babies and attempting to capture a feral pig to be a pet is never a good idea. These pigs have instincts to live in the wild. There are quite a few that have been domesticated by professionals in the pig community, but this isn't recommended for the novice pig person.





## How to spot the difference between a farm pig and mini type breed

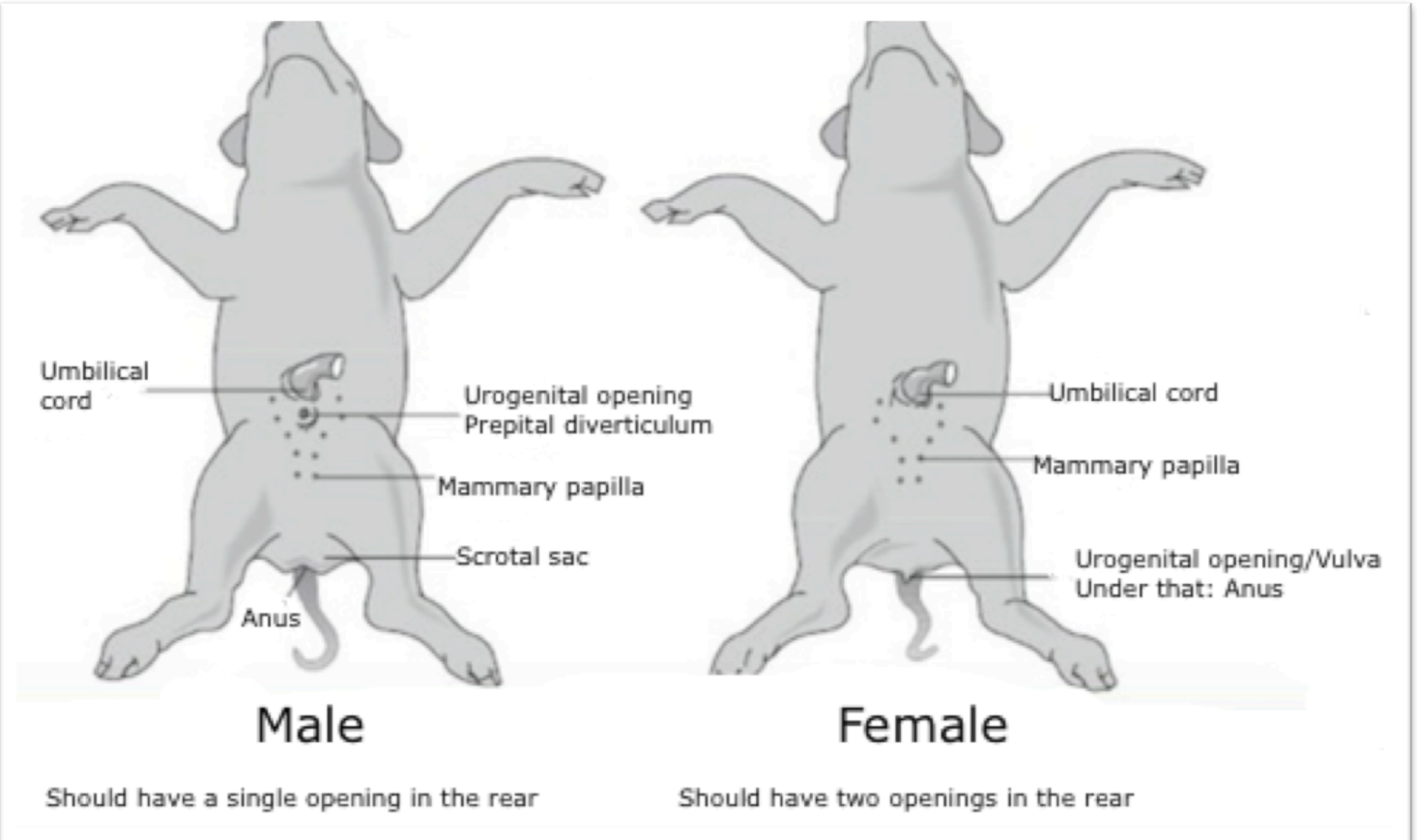


A farm pig has specific characteristics that set them apart from mini pigs. A mini pig is a subclass of pigs that are smaller than the farm pig. Potbellied pigs and mini pigs are terms typically used interchangeably; they have smaller, more erect ears. They usually have a little sway to their back, and shorter legs than the livestock pigs, and they have a straight tail that loves to wag when they're happy. Because so many breeds fall into the "mini" category, body shape and differ. For example, Juliana breed pigs typically don't have the "potbelly" that potbellied pigs are known to have. KuneKunes have the wattle that other breeds aren't known for, Meshian pigs have the wrinkly skin and a different look altogether than other mini pig breeds. ALL the piglets are small when born, but they all grow much bigger.

Farm Pigs typically have "floppy" ears and a curly tail and sometimes a longer snout. They're known to have longer legs and leaner bodies, as piglets, they can certainly be mistaken for a mini pig if you're not educated on mini pig breeds. There are multiple breeds of "full size" farm/production pigs as well and they come in all shapes, colors and sizes too. Pigs are pigs, there has been so much cross breeding that it is sometimes difficult to tell. Above are examples of farm pigs, the center picture being, by far, the best example of the differences between a farm pig, piglet and adult mini pig.



## How can you tell what the sex of the pig is?



### Males

- Cryptorchidism in males with "retained" or undescended testicles
- Sexually mature early on, at 6 weeks, they can impregnate an intact female pig
- Ejaculate everywhere, mounting people, other pets, household objects
- Boars are unpredictable and can act aggressively
- Intact male pigs do NOT make good pets
- Preputial diverticulum or "scent gland" may be removed by eversion and excision to minimize the pooling and discharge of foul-smelling preputial fluid.
- Males tend to have a musky type odor
- Urine will come from under a male pig

### Females

- Vulva on back end will swell when in heat.
- Sexually mature as early as 8-12 weeks
- Will attempt to mount people, other pets, household objects
- Should never have "discharge" from vulva, even when in heat
- Prone to developing reproductive organ tumors or uterine infections when left intact
- Behavior issues can occur with intact female pigs
- Urine will come from the rear end of a female pig



## Section 2: How to accommodate a pig at the shelter

Pigs are NOT dirty animals that you may have heard they were. Instead, pigs are super clean animals and typically keep their potty area separate from their living/eating quarters, when space allows.

Pigs are very dense animals; therefore, they don't always look like they're heavy, until you go to pick one up. They do not do well on slippery surfaces or concrete floors. While everyone in the pig community appreciates your willingness to accept a pig into your facility, there are certain things a pig will need in order to be safe and comfortable.

If the floors are slippery, please consider putting something slip resistant on the floor to prevent injuries. Tractor Supply Stores sell a horse stall mat that can be used for smaller enclosures that will absorb the heavy foot and also provide a slip resistant surface for pigs you may get in from time to time.

If you have a securely fenced in enclosure outside, this is even better for pigs. Fences must be secure in order to keep a pig in the confines. Pigs are not only super intelligent, but also very strong. An outside structure, such as a dog house, can provide a great place for them to dig in the dirt and also a good place for them to lay down out of the sun or cold (depending on the season). The outside enclosure should have something soft like straw or blankets to help this pig rest more comfortably.

Pigs are known to root around and be pigs, this includes not only the dirt, but if not given a lot of space, pigs are known to be destructive as well. They have eaten drywall, rugs, water hoses, trash, bags, doors, carpet and anything else you may see outside. If given enough space and an area dedicated for their use, you normally won't see any issues.

There should be a water source of some kind for drinking, but if outdoors in hot weather, kiddie pools are often used to give pigs a place to cool down since they do not sweat to reduce body temperatures. They actually do not sweat. Pigs use mud in "wallows" to protect themselves from the sun, all pigs can get sunburned, but pink pigs are especially at risk. Sunburn and potential complications will be discussed in the health section.

A dog bed can work out great for a pig, but some pigs are rather harsh on dog beds and have been known to tear them to pieces in only a few minutes. Some pigs do fine with these types of beds, but others root so hard they rip them, (And pigs LOVE to hear that ripping sound) so they continue to rip them up sometimes swallowing pieces of fabric or filler. (Which can lead to obstructions or choking)

A pig will normally "nest" or hoard a bunch of different things into their space, so a pile of old blankets or sheets is ideal for their area.

Since most animal shelters mainly house cats and dogs, it is important for you to know that dogs and pigs are a dangerous combination. Pigs are prey animals and dogs are natural predators, so housing these two animals together is an accident waiting to happen. Pigs and cats are known to do well together though. Litter-boxes are the main problem, as pigs will attempt to root in these boxes and possibly eat the litter, which can obviously be problematic.

Pigs have known to be territorial animals as well, so once their defined space is achieved, they may not want anyone to come inside, especially given they've been betrayed by people in the past. (Which is why they're at a shelter to begin with) This will be discussed further in the behavioral section.

Pigs are comfortable in a temperature range of 65 to 75°F and can easily become overheated in temperatures exceeding this.

# Section 3: Pig Nutrition

Although this is more important in the long term care setting, pigs do require a special diet. One made for pigs. Mini pig feed is sold at most farm type stores, but the main purpose of this page is to let you know that dog food is NOT an appropriate substitute for pigs. The sodium content in dog food is too high for pigs and can lead to salt toxicity, a condition that pigs are prone to when there is limited or no access to fresh water.

Mazuri sells a mini pig food that is widely found across the USA and Canada. Several other companies manufacture feed for mini pigs, but they need a diet made for mini pigs, not grower type food made for farm pigs. The mini pig feed was designed for pet pigs and focuses on longevity while ensuring they have the appropriate amounts of vitamins and minerals they need.

These foods can be combined with small amounts of vegetables and some fruits. Pigs can essentially eat anything people can eat although fattening and high sugar foods are discouraged since pigs gain weight so easily.

For short term purposes, mini pig feed is best for them and since the amount of feed is based on their weight, included is the recommendations from Mazuri regarding how much should be fed based on the weight of the pig. Also included is how to estimate the weight of a pig without a scale. Feed recommendations for the pelleted feed.

### Appropriate vegetables and fruits: (in moderation)

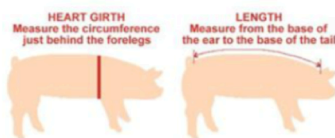
- |                   |              |
|-------------------|--------------|
| Lettuce (Romaine) | Zucchini     |
| Spinach           | Apples       |
| Kale              | Grapes       |
| Collards          | Strawberries |
| Carrots           | Raspberries  |
| Squash            | Pumpkin      |

This is only a few examples of healthy foods that can be given to pigs.

Fresh water should ALWAYS be accessible to pigs. This is extremely important because when water supplies are limited, pigs tend to drink massive amounts when fresh water becomes available leading to serious neurological issues. (More in pig health section)

#### MPERIAL - Weight of your pig in POUNDS

1. Obtain a fabric measuring tape or a piece of string to use as a measure. If using string mark the dimensions on the string and then measure the dimensions using a steel tape measure.
2. Place the tape/string under the pig just behind the front legs and measure the circumference of the pigs girth in inches. This measurement is known as the *Heart Girth* (see graphic)
3. Then measure the *Length* of the pig along its back from the base of its ears to the base of its tail, again in inches. (see graphic)
4. To calculate the pigs weight, first square the *Heart Girth* to get the *Girth Result*.
5. Now Multiply the *Girth Result* by the *Length* and DIVIDE by 400.
6. You now have the weight of your pig in Pounds.



Example:

- Porky Pig has a *Heart Girth* of 50 inches and a *Length* of 40 inches.
- Squaring the *Heart Girth* (50 x 50) = 2500 = *Girth Result*
- Multiply the *Girth Result* (2500) by the *Length* (40) and divide by 400 = 250 Pounds.

Table: Feeding Rate of Mazuri® Mini Pig Active Adult

Pig Weight	1.0% of Body Weight		2.0% of Body Weight		
	Lbs.	grams	Cups*	grams	Cups*
10		45	¼	91	½
20		90	½	181	1
30		136	¾	272	1 ⅓
40		181	1	363	2 ¼
50		227	1 ⅓	454	2 ⅔
60		272	1 ⅔	544	3 ¼
70		318	2	635	3 ¾
80		363	2 ¼	726	4 ¼
90		408	2 ½	816	4 ¾
100		454	2 ⅔	907	5 ⅓

\* Measurement equivalents: ½ cup = 85 g, 1 cup = 170 g



## Section 4: Mini Pig Behaviors/Sounds-What do they mean?

Some pigs are very vocal while others are relatively quiet. Vocal pigs can sound scary, but the sounds may mean something different than you think. For instance, a pig that is squealing loudly may be lonely, scared, or it may be around the time this pig usually eats.

We have a page on our website dedicated to the sounds and what we believe they mean. Please see [www.MiniPigInfo.com](http://www.MiniPigInfo.com) for more information.

Aggressive pigs aren't unheard of, especially with regards to intact pigs. They do NOT make great pets and aggression is the 2<sup>nd</sup> most common reason why people decide they no longer want to have a pig in the home.

Aggressive pigs may be aggressive because of hormones, fear or because their former pig parents never took the time to train them. Pigs aren't trusting animals and will be scared at a strange place with strange people and unfamiliar scents.

Pigs have emotions similar to humans in that they are very sensitive and express emotions like people would. Depressed pigs can cry real tears, they may lay around and not be very engaged. They may be reluctant to eat or drink because they're sad that their family is no longer there to care for them. This is actually normal behavior. We expect this when a pig is dropped off at a shelter. They grieve the loss of their human family and will sometimes sink into a depressive state. It is also common for pigs to protest the food given to them for the same reason. Pigs that have been found wandering will usually gobble up whatever you give them, but pigs coming from a home are usually sad and will not.

Sorting boards are boards that can be used for protection and/or to move animals in the direction in which you need them to go. These can also be used with pigs. Sorting boards are a must have for pig families as some pigs will get an attitude problem every now and again and this can be used in the event a pig charges or tries to bite.

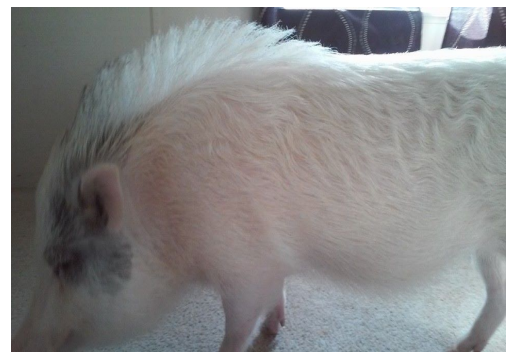
Pot-Bellied Pigs can be highly territorial, requiring adequate personal space or they are likely to charge. Good handlers must be observant of what their pig is doing - including spacing - at all times. Pigs can become easily stressed and can emit a scream. Pigs that are challenging someone will turn sideways with their back hunched, the mohawk will be raised and they will usually chomp their mouth causing excessive foam.

### Signs of Fear or Stress

- Mane or hackles up
- Twitches the tail (like a cat), usually on only one side
- Head swipe or side swipe of the head, quickly flinging the head from front to side (If your pig has long tusks, please be sure to protect yourself with a sorting board or barrier of some kind. These tusk, even sometimes accidental can cause a lot of damage to you or whomever you pig is head swiping)
- Chomping of the mouth (not teeth grinding). This is a special "click." Not all clicks are a sign of anger. Chomping of the mouth is usually accompanied by a foamy white discharge from the mouth.
- A long, low grunt vocalization can be a warning of anger (before acting on it).
- Charging. The Pot-Bellied Pig is not necessarily going to bite. Charging is a warning sign like a growling dog. If a pig charges, discontinue the test. The pig is showing signs of fear. To help you avoid a charge, the signs of a pig contemplating a charge are:
  - 1 . Tense body
  - 2 . Pig appears to be thinking
  - 3 . Tail is straight
  - 4 . Head is down, with eyes looking up
  - 5 . Side stepping- this is an indication that a pig is NOT happy. Chomping usually accompanies this behavior as well and typically leads to charging.

### Signs of Relaxation

- Sniffs the floor
- Shuts eyes
- Rubs a person's legs like a cat
- Gentle wagging of the tail like a dog (wagging on both sides)
- Teeth grinding
- Holds snout into the air to see better (the pig is exploring and is relaxed)
- Flops on side





## Section 5: Mini Pig Health/Illnesses

Pigs do not tend to show signs of illness until they're too sick to hide it any longer. This is the basics of a prey animal, any sign of weakness can be their demise, pigs are no different...even the domesticated pet pigs. Pigs have a variety of illnesses and sicknesses they can have, so we will not go too deep into that. However, one of the most common is dippity pig syndrome and because this illness is related to stress, we felt it was important to add the information here for you as well.

Dippity pig syndrome, also often used interchangeably with "Erythema Multiforme" or bleeding back, is a neurological disorder, but, not all pigs get it. Dippity is probably the most frightening thing most pig owners ever see. It's often prevalent in the springtime, but can be seen any time of the year. Dippity can be exacerbated by the sun/sunburn, stress; such as a violent thunderstorm, a trip to the vet, deviating from the normal routine or other things like moving furniture, having guests over, etc. It is not clear whether the stress is internal or external or whether it can be self-induced. Examples of external stress could be a sudden deviation in normal routine or excessive sunlight, internal stress could include dehydration or drastic changes in body temperature due to climate or other illness. There really is no specific treatment, but rather pain control and no preventative treatment either. (However, if sunburn or excessive sun is the trigger, using sunscreen can help lessen the chances of your pig getting dippity pig syndrome) Most often, the pigs affected are under 2 years old although there have been reports of pigs older than 2 years old getting it too. This illness appears suddenly and most times an area of "weeping" blister like sores are seen (usually the actual moisture is what is seen, it resembles a wet spot on the side or back), typically these lesions run side to side, not head to tail usually starting near the run and move towards the head and these lesions can form in a matter of minutes. A young or baby pig who was fine last night gets up this morning with long "gashes" across his back and when he tries to walk his hindquarters just seem made of rubber and he almost falls, "dipping" down to the floor with his belly. He hurts and cries out if you touch him and the gashes ooze a reddish fluid of thinly diluted blood (serum).

The overall symptoms vary from pig to pig, some have all the classic signs, some only have one or two. Some of the symptoms include: a sensitivity to being touched around the back end of the pig sometimes to the point that the pig squeals when touched a "hunkered-down" stance with the tail tucked between the back legs and clamped to the body weakness of and/or inability to use the back legs to the point of falling down pain, restlessness, and distress. This condition is very painful for pigs and because they often "dip" down when you pet the back the unofficial name given to this disorder has been dippity pig syndrome. The onset is very sudden and leaves just as mysteriously/abrupt. Typical timeframe is 48-72 hours. It is both scary and heartbreaking to see a pig with dippity, and once a pig gets it, they are prone to get it again. (the video below shows a pig with dippity pig syndrome) Sometimes people think their pig was the victim of a predator attack, while sometimes this may be the case, usually; it is a case of dippity pig syndrome. All other diseases need to be ruled out, because there are some that resemble the symptoms of dippity, so look for the weeping areas on the back and sudden onset along with the "dipping" when you touch the back to point towards a positive case of dippity pig syndrome.

Other illness pigs are prone to are erysipelas, leptospirosis, rabies, salt toxicity/water deprivation, swine pox, gastric ulcers, brucellosis, pneumonia, arthritis to name a few. We have more detailed information on our website, but in order to keep this manual/guide at a reasonable length, we ask that you check out website for additional information regarding diseases. We also have a list of veterinarians that will see pigs in case a pig in your care needs to be seen by a vet that is knowledgeable about pigs.

Please go to <http://www.minipiginfo.com/common-pig-illnesses.html> for more information about illnesses pigs can get.

Please go to <http://www.minipiginfo.com/mini-pig-vets.html> for a list of confirmed veterinarians that will see pigs.





## Section 6: Mini Pig Veterinarians

This list is ever changing, and since this guide is meant for any shelter, worldwide, we did not include the >100 pages of veterinarians we have called to verify that see pigs. Instead, we have included a link to our website with veterinarians that will see pigs.

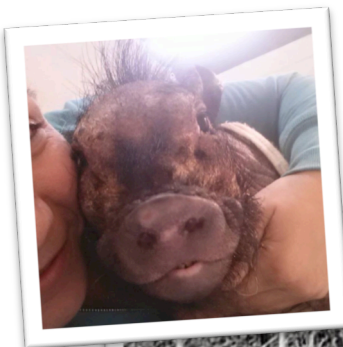
<http://www.minipiginfo.com/mini-pig-vets.html>

We also have a map so you can zoom in to a specific area to see where the veterinarians are located.

<http://www.minipiginfo.com/vet-map.html>

We have also compiled a list of universities that have veterinarian teaching hospitals that will see pigs in case this is the closest vet available to you.

<http://www.minipiginfo.com/university-vet-clinics.html>





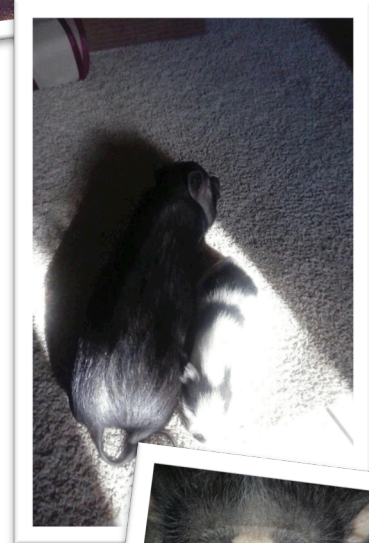
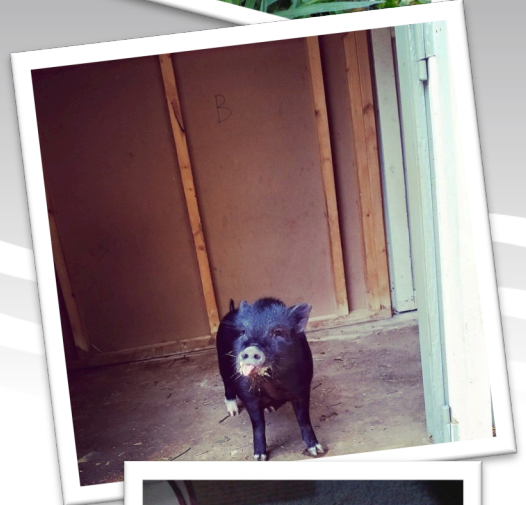
## Section 7: Mini Pig Rescues

Yes, there are pig rescues worldwide too. These are your frontline people. Most rescues have a network of people they'll work with in order to find fosters for pigs and sometimes even permanent homes. We urge you to reach out to us, if needed, and we will certainly contact people in your area, if any are available, in order to help you as much as possible. You can reach us via our Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/minipiginfo> or via email [minipiginfo@gmail.com](mailto:minipiginfo@gmail.com).

The list of rescues doesn't change too much, but here is our link to this page where the list is ever growing with the amount of unwanted pigs exploding.

<http://www.minipiginfo.com/pig-rescues-and-how-you-can-help.html>

The people who run these rescues can give you tips and possibly even come to your facility to help calm an upset pig. Most credible rescue folks will know how to handle an aggressive pig, comfort a sad pig and also show you how to handle a pig in general. I encourage you to reach out to the rescues in your area and build a relationship/partnership so when a pig does show up, you have an existing relationship



# Section 8: How to screen potential adoptive families

If you screen families for dogs and cats, you should also have a procedure in place for “exotics” as well. Pigs are unfortunately considered “livestock” in many areas, although the USDA doesn’t classify mini pigs as anything other than pets. Because of this, many cities, counties, and towns have forbid pigs to live within the city limits; therefore, zoning becomes a problem. Potential adoptive families will need to ensure they’re appropriately zoned for pigs before agreeing to take any pigs home. Otherwise, here is a sample application that can be used to be sure this pig finds a great/pig-appropriate family to live a great life with.

## Personal Information

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ Home# \_\_\_\_\_

Work# \_\_\_\_\_ cell# \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

Are you over 21 years of age? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

**If no, please have parent/guardian complete and sign the Application.**

Do you have a medical condition that would limit your ability to care for the pig? \_\_Yes \_\_No

## Property Information

Describe your home and yard:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Does your local zoning allow pet pigs? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

Many communities do not, and they have the legal right to come to your home and confiscate your pet if it is against their zoning ordinances.

Do you live in a: \_\_ House \_\_ Apartment \_\_ Condo \_\_ Mobile Home \_\_ Other

Do you: \_\_\_\_ Own \_\_\_\_ Rent

Do you live in a planned community? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

If you live in a planned community, you will need written permission from your homeowner's association to have a pig. Even though local zoning ordinances may permit pigs, a homeowner's association has the legal right to refuse them.

Do you have a fenced-in yard? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

Will your pig have his/her own pen or fenced area? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

## Household Information

Number of adults living in your home: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of children in your home and their ages: \_\_\_\_\_

Do all members in your household want this pet? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

Do you currently have a pig? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

If so, is this pig neutered/spayed? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Sex: \_\_\_\_\_

Names of other pets: \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever previously had a pig? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

If so, what happened to him? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What other pets do you currently have? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Who will be responsible for caring for the pig?

\_\_\_\_\_

Continued....

### Pig Specifics

Age preference:  Baby (under 1 year)  Younger (between 1-4)  Older (4+)  Does not matter

Sex preference:  Male  Female  Does not matter

Color preference:  Black  White  Does not matter

Where will the pig(s) live primarily?  Indoors  Outdoors

Are you willing to adopt two pigs who are buddies? Pigs are by nature herd animals and really enjoy the company of another pig to snuggle with, especially if they are outdoor pigs.  Yes  No

Are you willing to take an un-socialized pig (one who has had little to no human contact)?  Yes  No

Are you willing to take a special needs pet (one who is obese and needs dieting, one who has behavior problems and needs to be worked with, one who has health problems, etc.)?  Yes  No

Are you willing to assume the responsibility of the pay/neuter?  Yes  No

### If Indoors:

Is your home pig-proofed?  Yes  No  Need more info

Where will the pig sleep? \_\_\_\_\_

How many hours will the pig be alone each day? \_\_\_\_\_ Hours per day

Is there a safe place for your pig to stay during the day?  Yes  No

Is there a safe place for the pig to spend his outside time?  Yes  No

### If Outdoors:

Do you have a well-insulated house for the pig?  Yes  No

Do you have a way to heat this house in cold weather?  Yes  No

Is there access to a wading pool or mud hole in summer?  Yes  No

Is there a spot available with all-day shade?  Yes  No

Describe the living conditions you will provide. Please be very specific about the size of the pasture:

\_\_\_\_\_

### Vet Information

Vet Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Are your current pets neutered?  Yes  No

Are your current pets up-to-date on their vaccinations?  Yes  No

DOES YOUR CURRENT VET CARE FOR PBPS?  Yes  No

It is very important to find a vet who will treat the pig before actually getting one. A potbellied pig has different medical needs than your typical companion animal or even a farm pig. These vets are few and far between and could mean the difference between life and death in an emergency.

### Pig Education

I understand that the average weight of a full-grown potbellied pig is 75-150 pounds, some smaller and some larger, and that genetics determines size. Underfeeding the pig will not change his skeletal size and will only lead to health and/or behavioral problems. Over-feeding the pig or not feeding him food specific to his species will also lead to health and/or behavioral problems.

Yes  No  Need more information.

I understand that rooting is a basic natural instinct and that ALL pigs will root to varying degrees. This can lead to destructiveness in the house when they are bored and do not have other outlets or if they do not get enough outside time. It can also lead to destructiveness of lawn and flowerbeds.

Yes  No  Need more information

I understand that dogs and pigs must be carefully monitored and should NEVER be left unsupervised together, even the most gentle dog and even if the pig and dog are best of friends. They are both animals with animal instincts. Dogs are predators and pigs are prey, and a dog can kill a pig if provoked.

Yes  No  Need more information

I understand that a pig can become territorial. This can include growling, snapping, charging, or even biting to varying degrees. It is most common in house pigs but can also occur outside. In the wild, pigs are herd animals, and it is a natural instinct for them to try to test their dominance and become "top hog". Behavioral modification techniques can help. Because of this instinct, children and pigs must always be carefully supervised.

Yes  No  Need more information



I understand that a pig should not be placed in a home until he is at least 8-12 weeks of age, properly weaned, and eating on his own. Earlier placement can lead to starvation and/or aggressive behavior.

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Need more information

I understand that spaying/neutering of all pigs is ESSENTIAL, not only for reproduction purposes but also for behavioral and health reasons as well. An unaltered pig does not make a good house pet. An unaltered pig may also develop reproductive organ disease when older and larger and no longer a safe surgical candidate.

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Need more information

I understand that it will most likely be difficult to find a competent vet who will care for my pig. I also understand that I must have a plan set up in advance to get my pig to the vet in an emergency situation. This plan should include an adequate vehicle and adequate muscle if the pig is no longer mobile.

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Need more information

In the case that this pig is to be a companion for a current pig, I understand there will be an "introduction" period between the two, whereby they work it out between themselves who will be "top hog".

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Need more information \_\_\_\_\_ Not applicable

I understand that this animal is a pig, and as such, I will allow him to be a pig. I understand that he has specific needs basic to his nature, and I will strive to meet those needs and appreciate the very qualities that make him such a unique and delightful creature.

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Need more information

### **Hypothetical Questions**

**What steps would you take to find a lost pet?\_ \_**

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**What will you do with your pet when you go on vacation?**

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**What would you do if you're pet if it became ill and needed expensive veterinary care?**

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**What would you do if you became and could no longer care for your pet?**

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**What are your views on euthanasia and your animals? \_\_\_\_\_**

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**Continued....**

**General Information**

Please supply us with the name and e-mail of two references:

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Can someone come out and check your home to be sure it is safe (properly pig-proofed, adequate shelter, supplies on hand for pig's arrival, etc.)? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

How far would you be willing to travel to pick up your pig?

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In what way have you educated yourself on the proper care of a pig?

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Are you committed to care for the pig for his/her life. (it is estimated the lifespan of a potbellied pig can be up to 20 years)?

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Do you have any questions/concerns about caring for a pig?

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Most importantly, why do you want a pig as a pet?

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I hereby certify that the information I have provided above is true, correct, and complete to the best of my knowledge, and you may rely on this information to evaluate my application. I also understand that I will be asked to provide a donation fee (\$50 to \$200, depending on the cost of the spay/neuter)

\_\_\_\_\_ (signature)

\_\_\_\_\_ (date)

(Signature to be obtained at home inspection) You will be notified as soon as possible after the screening process is completed. Thanks for taking the time and showing interest in adopting a homeless animal from one of our many sanctuaries and shelters. Contact info for rescue whose adoption application this is has been removed for privacy, but a special thanks to them for allowing us to use for educational purposes.

This is a GREAT example of an adoption application fully touching on important factors for you to determine whether or not a family is appropriate to adopt a pig in your care. Again, the pig rescue world or mini pig info are fully able to help you find foster homes or temporary places for pigs to go should you not have appropriate accommodations. Please reach out to us for any questions. [mini-pig-info@gmail.com](mailto:mini-pig-info@gmail.com). Please see our website for a downloadable link to print off an application for your use.



## Section 9: Additional resources

Ensuring someone is educated before allowing a pig to go anywhere with them is key to finding successful placement. We feel like our website is full of valuable information any pig parent would need for any reason. But we also understand that there are other websites and sources out there that also encompass important information about pigs. Below you will find our favorite sources of information.

<http://www.minipiginfo.com>

<http://www.pigs.org>

<http://www.9sites.org>

<http://www.ansi.okstate.edu>

<http://www.cppa4pigs.org>

<http://www.merckmanual.com>

<http://www.rossmillfarm.com>

<http://www.farmsanctuary.org>

<http://theanimalbehaviorcenter.com>

<http://www.positivelypigs.com>

<http://www.carrsconsulting.com>

<http://www.teacuppig.info>

<https://vetmed.iastate.edu/vdpam>

<http://bestfriends.org/resources/other-animals/potbellied-pig-information>

Use these links as a reference or a guide to be sure you are fully aware of any/all possibilities when it comes to pigs. As always, we thank you for checking out the guide and please let us know if you have any questions or comments.

