

RABBIT CARE

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To have a healthy and happy pet rabbit an owner must understand its nutritional and behavioral needs. Rabbits are easy animals to keep successfully, yet many owners fail because they treat them like dogs. Rabbits are unique. They normally do NOT like to be picked up, yet they are inquisitive and curious. They eat all day, preferably grass hay. This diet prevents boredom, obesity, dental disease and problems with the stomach and intestine that can lead to diarrhea and death. Dietary problems arise when people insist on feeding more variety e.g. fresh foods, sugars as in fruit, alfalfa pellets in excess, seeds, etc. Even small amounts of these foods can cause problems.

DAILY FEEDING

Provide fresh water daily

Give **unlimited** quantities of **grass hay (timothy, orchard, brome)** at all times

Feed small amounts of alfalfa hay during pregnancy and growth (0-6 months)

Provide a LIMITED amount of high fiber pellets (limit to 1 tablespoon) daily

Certain fresh foods are good (parsley, cilantro, carrot greens) - limit to 1TB up to twice daily

HOUSING

Use a large cage or crate with a solid floor. Wire mesh can hurt the feet.

Provide food and water bowls or sipper bottles

Place housing near to family activity and include a hide box for security

Create a rabbit-safe play area outside the cage. Move or cover electrical cords.

Avoid using aromatic woods as bedding such as cedar. This can lead to respiratory problems.

Dental disease and obesity are common and are best controlled with measured amounts of pellets and UNLIMITED amounts of grass hay. Chewing is a natural, calming and necessary behavior for rabbits. In addition, their stomach must never be allowed to become empty. They must eat every day.

Female rabbits commonly get uterine and ovarian tumors and should be spayed before 1 or 2 years of age. Neutering males can help prevent urine spraying and territorial dominance behaviors.

Always use healthy, good quality foods and do not give in to begging. Treat foods can be harmful to your pet.