

## **Rabbits**

### **Diet**



#### ***Hay***

Timothy Hay should be 90-95% of an adult rabbit's diet. Oxbow Hay offers high quality timothy hay. Alfalfa hay is rich in calories and calcium. It should be fed to babies (less than 4 months old) and nursing or pregnant mothers. It should not be fed to adults because it can lead to obesity and urinary tract issues. Other hays that can be offered if your rabbit won't eat timothy hay are orchard grass, oat hay, bunny brome, and botanical hay. The quality of hay varies more than you might think. Make sure your hay is green and smells fresh before buying.

#### ***Pellets***

Timothy based pellets are recommended for adults. One quarter cup per four pounds of rabbit should be offered daily. Bunny Basics-T is a high quality timothy-based pellet. Alfalfa-based pellets are recommended for babies and nursing and pregnant mothers. Most pellets purchased at pet stores are alfalfa-hay based. Make sure you check the ingredients before buying. Make sure there are no seeds or treats mixed in!

#### ***Fresh Produce***

Vegetables (parsley, carrots, red and green leaf lettuces, dandelion greens, cilantro) and fruits (apple slices, banana slices, and strawberries in very small amounts) can be fed to your rabbit however sick animals should not be fed fruit or anything high in sugar.

# Housing

The suggested minimum housing requirements are that it should be at least six times the length of your stretched out rabbit. Solid flooring or slatted plastic flooring is best. Avoid wire floors as they can cause injury to the rabbit's hocks and toes. The housing should also be high enough for the rabbit to stand on its hind feet. A great alternative to traditional cages, are exercise pens, sold for either dogs or ferrets. Exercise pens are low cost, portable, multi configurable and are easy to clean.

## *Habitat Accessories*

The following should be included in your rabbit's house:

- water bottle
- heavy crock for water/pellets
- hay container, blankets
- a litter pan
- a hiding spot
- toys
- exercise area

## *Bunny Proofing*

Rabbits are enthusiastic chewers and precautions must be taken to ensure a safe environment. Be careful with rugs or carpet scraps, as rabbits like to chew on them. Electrical cords need to be tucked out of reach or covered with PVC. Valuables and plants should also be kept out of reach. A thick strip of untreated wood, Polyethylene tubing, sea grass mats, and blankets or throws can all be used to prevent destructive behavior.

# Medical Concerns

## *Respiratory Infections*

Sneezing, coughing, nasal discharge (maybe present on feet) and abnormal breathing.

## *Lice, Mites and Fungus*

Hair loss, scratching, aggressive behavior when touched (due to pain), and chewing or pulling at fur.

## *Decreased Appetite/Stool Production*

Decreased eating or stool production is a serious medical concern that can quickly become an emergency. Please contact your veterinarian for an appointment right away.

## *Malocclusion*

Drooling, grinding, hair loss or wet hair on chin or front paws is indicative of misaligned teeth. Contact your veterinarian for an appointment

### *Spay/Neuter*

Over 80% of unspayed females will develop uterine or ovarian cancer between two and five years of age. Preventing cancer by spaying your rabbit will give her the potential of reaching her life span of 8-10 years of age. Male and female rabbits benefit greatly from neutering/spaying, which helps to stop and/or prevent a variety of behavioral problems.

## **Bonding**

Rabbits are social animals and most desire companionship of their own kind. Before attempting an introduction, the rabbits must be spayed/neutered, at least two-four weeks prior to proceeding with an introduction. Bonding rabbits can lead to serious injury. It's recommended that those unfamiliar with the process seek guidance in this endeavor to avoid problems."

For more information on Rabbit Care, [click here](#) for a Rabbit Diet and Husbandry print-out.