What to Feed Rabbits

Large, unlimited amounts of fresh hay should be offered daily. Young bunnies should be introduced to hay as soon as they can eat on their own. Mixed grass hay or Timothy hay is preferred because it is lower in calories and calcium than alfalfa.

Use a good quality, high fiber alfalfa or timothy based pellet as a small part of your rabbit’s diet.

Feed a minimum of 1 cup vegetables for each 4 lbs. of body weight. Select at least three types of vegetables daily. A variety is necessary in order to obtain the necessary nutrients, with one each day that contains Vitamin A, indicated by an *. Add one vegetable to the diet at a time. Introduce gradually and eliminate if it causes soft stools or diarrhea.

Limit fruits to 1-2 tablespoons per 5 lbs. of body weight (none if dieting) from the list below of high fiber fruits. Sugary fruits such as bananas and grapes should be used only sparingly, as occasional treats. Bunnies have a sweet tooth and if left to their own devices will devour sugary foods to the exclusion of healthful ones.

Vegetables:

Alfalfa, radish & clover sprouts
Basil
Beet greens (tops)*
Bok choy
Broccoli (mostly leaves/stems)*
Brussels sprouts
Carrot & carrot tops*
Celery
Cilantro
Clover
Collard greens*
Dandelion greens and flowers (no pesticides)*
Endive*
Escarole
Green peppers
Kale(!)*
\textbf{Romaine}, Red or Green leaf (no iceberg or light colored leaf)*
Mint
Mustard greens*
Parsley (!)*
Pea pods (the flat edible kind)*
Peppermint leaves
Raddichio
Radish tops
Raspberry leaves
Spinach (!)*
Watercress*
Wheat grass

(!)=Use sparingly or rotate. High in oxalates, vitamin A or goitrogens and may be toxic in accumulated quantities over a period of time
Please note that there is currently dispute within the scientific community regarding the levels of oxalates and goitrogens in kale. Many of our rescuers have fed kale daily, combined with other veggies, with no ill effects. Others have found that kale fed in large amounts on a daily basis may contribute to bladder sludge and other health issues. HRS encourages you to make your own decisions on how you feed kale to your rabbit based on this information, and when solid, undisputed research is found we will update this and other articles relating to feeding kale.

**Fruits:**

Apple  
Blueberries  
Melon  
Orange (including peel)  
Papaya  
Peach  
Pear  
Pineapple  
Plums  
Raspberries  
Strawberries

Absolutely NO chocolate (poisonous!), cookies, crackers, breakfast cereals, bread, pasta, yogurt drops or other “human treats.” There is research to suggest these items may contribute to fatal cases of enterotoxaemia, a toxic overgrowth of “bad” bacteria in the intestinal tract.

Iceberg lettuce should not be given to your bunny. Iceberg lettuce contains little nutritional value, with little to no minerals, vitamins, or fiber. (Iceberg lettuce is mostly water). Iceberg lettuce, like many other lettuces, also contains lactucarium, a milky fluid that in large quantities acts on the nervous system, causing sleepiness and reducing pain sensations. In extreme doses, this could lead to diarrhea or other gut problems.

WWW.BUNNIESMATTER.ORG
How much does a bunny cost at “Bunnies Matter”?

At Bunnies Matter, whether we capture a bunny from a neighborhood or we acquire one from someone as a surrender, our minimal medical care “costs” PER BUNNY are $185 per bunny as follows:

Vaccination for RHDV2 is $45
Required chip fee is $15
Required spay or neuter is $125 (Average cost)

Many of our rescued bunnies also require an immediate health check and further medicines (pain meds, anti-biotics, etc.) which is an additional expense to us. (Not priced into this estimate)

In addition, in ALL new bunny homes, we also provide a FULL BUNNY STARTER KIT, complete with:

36” Exercise Pen - $45
Two Litter boxes - $10
Food and Water Bowl - $2
Nail Clippers - $5
Litter “Woody” Pellets - $8
Purina Rabbit Pellets - $10
Large Bag of Timothy Hay - $10
Animal Carrier (Good Cond.) - $15
Small Tarp - $5

Total “Full Bunny Starter Kit” = $110

BUNNIES MATTER COST FOR BONDED PAIR - $185 + $185 + $110 = $480 Value (Our cost)

Our “Adoption Fee” PER BUNNY is $100 each with equipment. ($200 for a bonded pair with equipment except as noted on our pens)

Our generous supporters donate money and supplies to help “Bunnies Matter” place these bunnies in great homes with the right food and equipment for them to get a great start in their new homes.
**BEST PLACES TO PURCHASE YOUR BUNNY SUPPLIES**  
(www.bunniesmatter.org)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bunny Supply</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Approximate Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>36&quot; Exercise pens</td>
<td><a href="http://www.chewy.com">www.chewy.com</a></td>
<td>$36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timothy Hay</td>
<td>Jones Feed, CAL Ranch</td>
<td>$26 a bale (Huge Amount)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Also found at Walmart and any pet store but really expensive this way)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bunny Pellets</td>
<td>Jones Feed, CAL Ranch</td>
<td>$10 (25 pound bag)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Also found at Walmart and any pet store – Avoid pellets that have seeds or treats in them)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Woody Pellets (Litter)</td>
<td>Jones Feed, CAL Ranch</td>
<td>$7 (40 pound bag)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper Pellets (Litter)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.chewy.com">www.chewy.com</a></td>
<td>$20 (30 pound bag)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Also at Petsmart &amp; Petco but a lot more expensive)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Litter Boxes</td>
<td>Walmart</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hidey Boxes</td>
<td>Costco</td>
<td>FREE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Food &amp; Water Bowls</td>
<td>Any $1 Store</td>
<td>$1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timothy Bunny Logs</td>
<td>Walmart and any pet store</td>
<td>Varies, they need wood to chew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bunny Treats</td>
<td>Best to give small pieces of carrots or banana for treats – avoid pet store treats as they are usually unhealthy treats (like yogurt treats).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Preparing for Your First House Rabbit

Bringing a new pet rabbit into your life is an exciting event. You’ll want to make sure you’re fully prepared so that you and your new bunny can get off to a great start. Learn the basics of rabbit ownership, and review our checklist of initial bunny supplies below!
Are you ready for a 10-year (or more) commitment?

Rabbits make wonderful indoor companions. They are clean, relatively quiet, and adorable! But before you jump into rabbit ownership, make sure a rabbit is a good fit for your family.

First of all, ensure you've properly budgeted for your new furry friend. Costs include an adoption fee; vet bills for spay/neuter surgery, annual checkups, and occasional illness; housing and bunny proofing supplies; and food. After ten or more years, these costs can add up! Make sure you do the math first. Learn more at How Much Does a Pet Rabbit Cost?.

Further, do your research on what it's like to own a rabbit. Rabbits like to chew EVERYTHING. So anywhere your rabbit goes must be bunny proofed. If not, you will be greatly disappointed when cherished possessions are gnawed up. Rabbits require daily exercise, so keeping them confined to a small space all the time will not suffice. In addition, if you're envisioning having a lap pet, a rabbit might not be right for you. In general, rabbits don't like being held. Finally, rabbits should not be thought of as "children's pets". Families with children can certainly enjoy the companionship of a rabbit, but the primary caregiver for a rabbit should always be an adult. See Children and Pet Rabbits for more information.

You can learn more about the realities of rabbit ownership in our article, Thinking about Getting a Pet Rabbit? to determine if a rabbit is a good fit for you and your family. If the answer is still "Yes!" then read on!
Prepare Your House

The first step when you decide to bring a bunny into your life is deciding where the bunny will primarily live. At My House Rabbit, we advocate that rabbits live inside the home with you. This provides much-needed social interaction for the rabbit, along with protection from predators and severe weather.

A great place to house your rabbit is in a central area of your home. You can use a puppy pen to block off a corner of a living room or family room. A puppy pen provides ample space for a litter box, food/water bowls, a hay box, and a cardboard castle. The rabbit also still has plenty of room to hop around in. Using a puppy pen is a better option than a cage because it provides more space, and it can be easily adjusted if you want to gradually increase the area to eventually give your bunny free reign in a bunny-proofed room (or rooms). Because puppy pens have doors, it's easy to let your bunny out of the pen for daily exercise. Learn more at Housing Your Pet Rabbit Indoors.

Once you’ve set up the primary housing location for your rabbit, you’ll have to bunny proof the surrounding area where your rabbit will romp, rumble and play. All cords must be covered with wire protectors or lifted out of reach (at least 3-4 feet). Your bunny will also be drawn to wooden furniture legs, books/stray papers, remote control buttons, moldings, rug corners, and basically anything else that's potentially "chewable". If you don’t want those things destroyed, you will have to keep them out of reach or covered. Or you will have to carefully supervise all out-of-pen exercise time. For more tips, see our article, Bunny Proofing Your House.

Bunny Supply Checklist

Indoor housing
Get a puppy pen 36 inches or higher so your rabbit can't jump out. Buy on Amazon >
Wire covers
Plastic sleeves can be neatly connected to your wall. Buy on Amazon >
Flex tubing is another great option for covering and/or bundling wires. Buy on Amazon >

Furniture / baseboard protection
Large split flex tubing can fit over wooden table or chair legs. Buy on Amazon >
Furring strips, 2x4s or other wood panels can be used to cover baseboards.

Puppy pens / baby gates
Puppy pens can help block off areas or confine your rabbit to a safe area of a room.
Buy on Amazon >
Metal baby gates can be used to block off rooms. Buy on Amazon >
Storage cube panels can be attached to the bottoms of baby gates with zip ties if the slats are too far apart. Buy on Amazon >

Litter box
A medium-sized cat litter box (no top) or a shallow storage container will do. Buy on Amazon >

Rabbit-safe litter
Opt for a recycled newspaper pellet litter such as Yesterday's News (unscented).
Buy on Amazon >

Food / water bowls
Ceramic dishes are heavy enough so your rabbit can't tip them over. Buy on Amazon >

Hay feeder
This helps keep hay fresh and available to your rabbit at all times.

Chair mat (optional)
You may want to protect your floor in the bunny area. Make sure to get a hard plastic one to resist chewing. Buy on Amazon >

Food (hay, pellets, vegetables, and water)
Purchase hay by the bale from a local farmer (check local Craigslist ads) or order bulk hay online at Small Pet Select (use coupon code MYHOUSERABBIT for free shipping).
Buy hay and pellets at Small Pet Select >

Cardboard box
Create a cardboard castle by cutting doorways and windows in a large cardboard box.

Chew toys
Sea grass mats are acceptable to chew and can be used to cover areas. Buy on Amazon >
Woven grass play balls are also a favorite for distraction. Buy on Amazon >
Wood and rope activity centers/toys capture rabbits’ interest. Buy on Amazon >

Nail clippers
You will need to regularly trim your bunny’s nails. If your rabbit has dark claws, a small flashlight helps you to locate the quick and avoid it. Buy on Amazon >

What bunny should I get and where?
Now here comes the fun part: Picking your rabbit! Many ask, “What breed is best?” The answer is that rabbits have many different kinds of personalities and this is not confined to any particular breed. There are lovable, affectionate rabbits spanning all kinds of breeds, both purebred and mixed.
A rescue or shelter is a great place to look for your rabbit. Rescues and shelters have baby bunnies, adult bunnies, senior bunnies, and pairs of bonded bunnies—in all breeds and sizes. Check out PetFinder.com or your local House Rabbit Society chapter website for available rabbits up for adoption near you.

The added advantage of adopting a bunny through a rescue is that the volunteers often litter train the rabbits while in their care. Further, in general, rabbits older than six months have already been spayed or neutered. This greatly reduces vet bills for you. To learn more about adopting a pet bunny, see our article, **Benefits of Adopting a Pet Rabbit**.

Because rabbits are social creatures, you may want to adopt a bonded pair of rabbits. This is a great option for people who work during the day. You won’t have to worry about your rabbit being lonely if he/she has a bunny pal. If you’re unsure, talk to a rescue volunteer about the pros and cons of adopting a pair.

Now that you’ve got a good overview of rabbit ownership, hop on over to our **Rabbit Care** and **Rabbit Behavior** sections for more articles about creating a safe and enriching home for your first house rabbit.

**Recommended House Rabbit Supplies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Price 1</th>
<th>Price 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small Pet Select 2nd Cutting Timothy Hay</td>
<td>$29.99</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Pet Select Rabbit Food Pellets, 5-Pound</td>
<td>$26.95</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sterlite 16558010 28QT Storage Box</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Precision Pet 36 in. Ultimate ExPen Black</td>
<td>$69.68</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gardner Bender FLX-3610 Split Flex Tubing</td>
<td>$1.99</td>
<td>$6.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible Polyethylene Wire Loom, 1 1/2 Inch</td>
<td>$14.73</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legrand - Wiremold C210 Cord Mate II Kit</td>
<td>$19.98</td>
<td>$29.99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
About the Author

Abi Cushman is a contributing editor of My House Rabbit and Animal Fact Guide. When she’s not writing about pet rabbits or weird animals online, she writes and illustrates funny books for kids [about rabbits and weird animals]. Her debut picture book, Soaked, comes out in Summer 2020 from Viking Children's Books.

Learn more at her website, www.abicushman.com, or follow her on Twitter: @abicushman and Instagram: @abi.cushman

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Living with a House Rabbit

Why a House Rabbit?
Perhaps you've just adopted your first rabbit, or maybe you already have a rabbit and would like more information to help you understand her better. The House Rabbit Society, a national nonprofit organization, recommends that you keep your rabbit in the house rather than outdoors. Rabbits are intelligent, social animals who need affection, and they can become wonderful companion animals if given a chance to interact with their human families.

The benefits of spay and neuter
Although most rabbits will use a litterbox, hormones may cause unneutered males and unspayed females to "mark territory." Spaying or neutering your rabbit improves litterbox habits, lessens chewing behavior, decreases territorial aggression, and gives your rabbit a happier, longer life. Have your rabbit neutered between ages 3 1/2 to 6 months, depending on sexual maturity, by an experienced rabbit veterinarian.

For rabbits more than 2 years old, get a veterinary checkup first.

Housetraining
Rabbits may have free run of the home. However, it's best for most--and necessary for some--to start with a cage. To make cage time learning time, fasten a litterbox in the corner of the cage that your rabbit chooses for a "bathroom." As soon as he uses the box consistently, you can give him some freedom. Place one or more large litterboxes in corners of the running area outside the cage.

Use only positive reinforcement (treats and praise)--never punishment.
Bunny-proofing

Bunny-proofing your home is part of living with a house rabbit. It is natural for rabbits to chew on furniture, rugs, drapes, and, most deadly of all, electrical cords. Cords must be concealed so that the rabbit cannot reach them. Exposed cords can be encased in vinyl tubing (found at hardware stores). By splitting the tubing lengthwise with a utility knife the cord can be pushed inside it.

Give your rabbit enough attention, safe chewables, and toys, so that she is distracted from chewing furniture and rugs. A cardboard box stuffed with hay makes an inexpensive playbox. Young rabbits (under a year) are more inclined to mischief and require more confinement and/or bunny-proofing than mature rabbits.

House rabbits and other animals

House rabbits and indoor cats can get along fine, as do rabbits and well-mannered dogs. Dogs should be trained to respond to commands before being trusted with a free-running rabbit, and supervision is needed to control a dog's playful impulses (this is especially true for puppies). Adding a second rabbit is easiest if the rabbits are neutered adults of opposite sexes, and they are introduced for short periods in an area unfamiliar to both rabbits.

Major Health Problems

**Intestinal blockages:** Because rabbits groom themselves constantly, they get furballs just as cats do. Unlike cats, however, rabbits cannot vomit, and excessive swallowed hair may cause a fatal blockage. Rabbits can also develop a serious condition known as GI stasis which has many of the same symptoms.

If your rabbit shows a decrease in appetite and in the size of droppings, get advice from a rabbit veterinarian.

**Prevention:** keep bunny brushed (less hair is swallowed); provide exercise time/space—at least 30 hours a week; give a fresh handful of hay daily; add fresh vegetables gradually to the diet; give petroleum laxatives during a heavy molt or if synthetics have been swallowed.

**Bacterial balance:** A rabbit's digestive tract is inhabited by healthful bacteria. If the "good" bacteria balance is upset by stale food or a sudden change in diet, harmful bacteria can take over the digestive track and kill the rabbit.

**Prevention:** Keep all rabbit food in a cool dry place and make dietary changes slowly, giving a new food in small amounts. If no abdominal gurgling or loose stool results in 24 hours, the food may be offered again. If your rabbit goes outside, check for pesticides and toxic plants. (A list is available from your local poison center.)

**Infectious bacteria:** Many rabbit diseases are caused by bacteria,
not viruses, and can be treated with antibiotics. If your rabbit shows symptoms of a "cold," take him to a veterinarian familiar with antibiotics that can be safely used in rabbits. Oral drugs of the Penicillin family, such as Amoxicillin, should NOT be given to a rabbit, since there is risk of destroying good intestinal bacteria.

**It's up to you**

Find an experienced rabbit doctor before a problem develops. If your rabbit has been harassed by a predator, take him to a veterinarian even if no injuries are apparent. When it is over, keep your rabbit cool with nearby wet towels or ice.

Regularly check eyes, nose, ears, teeth, weight, appetite, and droppings.

**Danger Signs**

Don't waste valuable time Call your veterinarian immediately if you see:

- Diarrhea with listlessness
- Sudden loss of appetite with bloat and abdominal gurgling
- Loss of appetite with labored breathing
- Loss of appetite with runny nose
- Head tilt
- Incontinence (urine-soaked rear legs)
- Abscesses, lumps or swellings anywhere
- Any sudden behavior change

**Have List**

**HOUSING**

- Roomy cage
- Resting board
- Litterbox (in cage)
- Pellet bowl or feeder
- Water bottle/crock
- Toys (chew & toss)
- Pet carrier

**RUNNING SPACE**

- Indoors:
- Bunny-proofed room(s)
- Litterbox
- Toys (chew & dig)
Outdoors:
Fenced patio/porch/playpen (with floor)

**CONSUMABLES**

- Limited pellets daily
- Fresh water
- Hay/straw (for digestive fiber and chewing recreation)
- Fresh salad veggies/fruit (add gradually)
- Barley/oats (*very* small amounts)
- Wood (for chewing recreation)
- Multiple enzymes (digestive aid)
- Petroleum laxative (when needed for passing hair)

**GROOMING**

- Flea comb
- Brush
- Flea products safe for rabbits (*no Frontline!*)
- Toenail clippers

**SUPPLIES**

- Dust-free litter (not wood shavings)
- Pooper scooper
- Whiskbroom/dustpan
- White vinegar (for urine accidents)
- Hand vacuum
- Chlorine bleach (for disinfecting)
- Newspapers

More info needed?
Our web site contains all the information you might need on bunny-proofing, house-training, handling, introducing two rabbits, spaying and neutering, and locating rabbit veterinarians.

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_House Rabbit Society_ is a nonprofit rescue and education group. We welcome your [feedback](#) and appreciate your [donations](#). Please [join](#) today!
Medical Concerns

Jul 10, 2011

Rabbits are prey animals, and as such, can hide their symptoms when sick. It’s up to you, then, to watch them carefully, and to note the slight changes in their personality and behavior that might indicate that they are sick. Following are some medical issues that you should take note of when living with a house rabbit.

GI Stasis/Not Eating
GI Stasis is probably the most common rabbit ailment. You will almost certainly encounter it sometime in a rabbit’s life. GI Stasis refers to the condition where a rabbit suddenly stops eating. Such a rabbit won’t even eat his favorite treat. The danger when this happens is the rabbit’s body temperature begins to fall rapidly. **You can lose a rabbit to hypothermia in a matter of HOURS.** You need to determine NOW how you will restore or stop the drop in body temperature while you’re rushing your rabbit to the veterinarian. One of the best ways to do this is to place a hot water bottle wrapped in a towel in the bottom of a carrier and place the rabbit on top of it. Microwave bags that can be heated, or even a bottle or jar with a good seal could be used instead. **Warning: It is imperative you do not allow your rabbit to get wet! Getting wet may cause the rabbit’s body temperature to drop faster!**

GI Stasis is can be treated, but it is deadly if the body temperature drops low enough or appropriate treatment is not given quickly enough. Typical treatment includes a motility drug, warm subcutaneous fluids, and Simethicone if there is bloating. If bloating is causing pain, it is very important for pain medications to be given. [Find out more here.](#)

**Bacterial Infections**

The first indication of an infection may be a runny nose or eye, sometimes a high temperature, sometimes a rattling sound from the lungs or (rarely) a coughing sound. It is important to see your veterinarian as soon as the first symptoms of any infection appear, as they are more easily cured when caught in the early stages. The bacteria you may hear the most about is called **Pasteurella.** This used to be a major problem, but with the newer antibiotics, this bacteria can often be eliminated. And, if not totally eliminated, it can be controlled with the use of long term antibiotics. Most of the symptoms described are quite common for many types of bacteria, so it is important to have your veterinarian do a culture to determine exactly what is being treated. [Find out more here.](#)

**Amoxicillin Danger**

Never let a veterinarian give your rabbit amoxicillin. It is a pink liquid antibiotic that smells like bubble gum. **Amoxicillin is very dangerous for rabbits,** and has killed many more than it has helped. Any penicillin-based drug can be dangerous for your rabbit, so try to find a veterinarian who is knowledgeable about rabbit-safe antibiotics, and who is familiar with the safer drugs such as enrofloxins such as Baytril or Cipro, Chloramphenicol, or sulfa-drugs based like Septra or TMS.
High or Low Temperature

A rabbit’s normal temperature ranges from 101.3-104F (38.3-39.4C). A temperature much below or above that means your rabbit is in danger. One of the first steps to take is to bring the temperature down if it’s too high, or up if it’s too low, regardless of the underlying symptoms, because the high or low temperature itself could seriously harm or kill your rabbit. Cooling your rabbit’s ears with ice cubes or cool water or warming your rabbit up with a heating pad is a good way to quickly equalize his or her temperature. If you do not know how to take your rabbit’s rectal temperature, it’s a good idea to have your veterinarian show you how to do so before you have an emergency. Always use a plastic thermometer, to eliminate the danger of the thermometer breaking off inside if the bunny gives a strong kick.

Red Urine

Rabbits’ urine varies in color from clear to yellow to brown to bright red. This is usually not a cause for alarm unless there are additional signs such as sitting and straining to urinate, loss of appetite or temperature. When you see red urine, don’t panic. Just keep your eyes open for other signs that might indicate a problem. If in doubt, you can have your veterinarian test to see whether there is blood in the urine.

Spay/Neuter

House Rabbit Society has had many thousands of rabbits spayed or neutered with approximately .1% mortality due to anesthesia. On the other hand, the risk of reproductive cancer (which is fatal) for an unspayed female rabbit stands at approximately 85%, which makes spaying a necessity. For male rabbits, the benefits are primarily behavioral (eliminating spraying and hormone-related aggression), but are just as important. A knowledgeable rabbit veterinarian can spay or neuter your rabbit with very little risk to a healthy rabbit. Find out more here.

Cedar and Pine Shavings

Any litter made of softwood like cedar or pine is very bad for your rabbit and other pets. The aromatic hydrocarbons produced from softwood beddings can cause both respiratory and liver damage in rabbits and other small animals. Use organic litter in the litter box and put newspaper in the cage tray. Find out more here.
Teeth

Rabbits’ teeth can be misaligned. This condition is known as malocclusion, which means that a rabbit’s constantly-growing teeth are not wearing down properly. If the misalignment is bad, the teeth will need to be clipped, dremeled or removed so that the rabbit can eat. Usually malocclusion just strikes the front teeth, but occasionally, the back teeth can also be misaligned. One indication of this is a wet chin that is caused by drooling. If this is the case, your rabbit will need his molars trimmed by a veterinarian on a regular basis. Find out more here.

Surgeries

Make sure your rabbit is in good health prior to elective surgeries. Food and water should not be removed from a rabbit the evening before surgery! Any change in diet can upset a rabbit’s sensitive digestive tract and cause problems in post-operative recovery. One of the reasons some veterinarians recommend removing animals’ food before surgery is the possibility that they may vomit. Rabbits cannot throw up, thus this is not a concern. Additionally, some veterinarians are concerned about spaying rabbits with a full cecum. Unfortunately, the cecum would take 3-4 days of fasting to empty out, and by that time, the rabbit would be dead. So please, do not fast your rabbit before surgery!

After surgery, make sure the rabbit’s environment is clean, and check her incision site daily for swelling or discharge. Do everything you can to get your rabbit to eat again as soon as possible after returning home. To coax him to eat again, you may have to offer a variety of treats, including his regular pellets and hay. If your rabbit has not eaten for 48 hours after surgery, consult your veterinarian.

Head Tilt

Head Tilt is most often caused by an infection of the inner ear. Often within 3 to 12 hours from the first symptom, the rabbit will be tumbling uncontrollably. Do not try to protect the rabbit with towels. She will tangle in them and break her legs. Once this tumbling begins, it continues for as much as 12 weeks or even more. During this time the rabbit cannot eat, drink, or sleep on her own. You must do it all for her. When the rabbit finally recovers, a permanent head-tilt of as much as 90° may remain. However these head-tilt bunnies are quite capable of enjoying a quality life despite their unusual posture. Find out more here.
**Gi Stasis**
*Catch it early and it could save your bunnies life!*

**3 warning signs**
1) Reduced appetite - or not eating at all
2) Droppings are different than usual
3) Change in behaviour - sitting hunched up in a corner or cannot settle

**3 essential products**
**THAT CAN REALLY HELP**

- **Bene-bac probiotic**
  Excellent for digestive support & can be used daily. Powder is added to water.

- **Oxbow critical care**
  For feeding fibre to your bunny and to help get the gut back on track.

- **Simethicone**
  Infant gas drops. Syringe feed 1ml per hour for first 3 hours and then 1ml every 3–8 hours after.

**3 helpful tips**
1) Encourage them to run about to get their stomachs moving
2) Massage their belly
3) Encourage them to eat by gently waving some favourite foods in front of their face

**THE FIRST 24 HOURS ARE CRUCIAL** - Always contact your vet asap if you suspect your rabbit is unwell and you are unsure what to do

www.best4bunny.com
New Bunny
Litter Box & Pen Set Up Information

How to make your litter box

**Step 1** - Add a thin layer of the "Woody" pellets to the bottom of the litter box. Just enough to line the entire bottom of the litter box.

**Step 2** - Add a generous layer of hay over the pellets. Bunnies should always have unlimited hay.

Every morning and evening, your bunny should be given fresh Timothy hay. Giving more hay at one end of the box allows your bunny to sit in the box and eat fresh hay, and pee & poop at the same time. When you can see the "Woody" pellets at the bottom of the litter box, it's time to add more hay. You can always get a "Hay Feeder" that attaches to the pen to supplement your bunnies fresh hay. You should change the entire litter box a minimum of once a week, but your bunnies will love you if you change it twice a week.

Pen set up

When setting up your X-pen for the first time, always protect your carpet or tile with a 6x8 foot tarp. Next, you will set up your x-pen and make sure that the door opens OUT and that then x-pen door doesn't drag on the tarp (that means your pen is upside down). The minimum contents of the pen includes: Hidey box with blanket underneath, Litter box, Food bowl, Water bowl, & toys. We **DO NOT** recommend the water bottles that attach to the pens. They do not supply enough water as bunnies drink **A LOT** of water, and they are bad for their teeth. Toys should include: Wood blocks, paper towel holders, HARD plastic toys etc. They love applewood chew sticks, willow balls and Bunny "Logs" just to name a few.

This is our typical set up. We always make sure that the water bowl is away from the blankets. Bunnies like to "rearrange" their pen, and if the water bowl is to close to their blankets, the blanket will absorb the water and you will have a soggy blanket and the bunny will have no water. (We get our water feeders from Walmart. They are actually a "Chicken feeder" and they are $10)

**NEVER**
place the pen next to any electrical cords, extension cords or outlets where they can possibly chew them and get electrocuted.

**NEVER**
hang any "cute" decorative lights in or along the pens. Remember, bunnies LOVE to chew ANYTHING!