

Rabbit Basics

*Noah's Landing Pet Care Clinic
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Lifespan 7-9 years

Diet

Under one year of age:

- ~Free choice of alfalfa hay, may add timothy hay as well
- ~Free choice of pellets

One year and older:

- ~Free choice of timothy hay (alfalfa not preferred for adults)
- ~Free choice of pellets - if the pellets are timothy based
 - ~Oxbow Hay Company 1-800-249-0366
 - ~www.oxbowhay.com
- ~Limit pellets (10 per day) - if the pellet is alfalfa based

All ages should also receive:

- ~Green leafy vegetables: a pile the size of the rabbit
 - ~The darker the green, the higher the nutritional value
 - Kale, Romaine lettuce, Escarole, Parsley
 - Endive, Collard greens, Dandelion greens
 - Leaf lettuce, Carrot/Beet tops, Water cress
 - Mustard greens, Bok choy, Chickory, Basil
- ~Root vegetables: ½ cup for large rabbits (9-12 lbs), ¼ cup for small rabbits
 - ~Carrots, Turnips, Beets, Sweet potatoes

Fresh water should be provided at all times

- ~Water bottles should be checked daily for malfunctions

Treats: Limit to: 1 heaping tablespoon, per 2 lbs of body weight per day

Good choices include:

- ~Strawberries, Blackberries, Blueberries, Raspberries, Cranberries
- ~Apples, Kiwi fruit, Pineapples, Peaches, Cherries
- ~Pears, Mangos, Melons, Papaya
- ~Bean or alfalfa sprouts

Commercial treats should be totally avoided, stick to natural and healthy treats

Housing

- ~For small breeds: 24" x 24" x 18"
- ~For large breeds: 36" x 36" x 24"
- ~Should have a solid floor area
- ~Avoid cages with solid walls

- ~Cages should provide stimulating activities for rabbits, such as toys, hay to constantly munch on, set near a window or active area in a house to keep rabbits from becoming depressed and discontented

Litterbox Training

- ~Start with a small area, pick a corner where the rabbit has already used, as a litterbox to that corner
- ~Recyclable litters should be used
- ~Add a small amount of hay on top of the litter to entice the rabbit to sit in the box and eat
- ~Reward the rabbit when it uses the box, NEVER punish the rabbit while in the litter box
- ~REMBMBER: Rabbits are not cats and are not likely to use the litter box 100% of the time!

Exercise

- ~Rabbits need plenty of time out of the cage daily to provide exercise
- ~Lack of exercise can lead to numerous medical problems not to mention an unhappy rabbit

Schedule of Veterinary Care

- ~Annual wellness examination
- ~Spaying/Neutering at 3-6 months of age
- ~Nail trims as needed, if unable to trim at home

Common Medical Problems

- ~**Cancer of the uterus in female rabbits: prevent this by spaying your rabbit at a young age**
- ~Aggressiveness and urine spraying: prevent by neutering at a young age
- ~Overgrown teeth due to misalignment: have teeth checked and trimmed by your veterinarian as needed
- ~Diarrhea: true diarrhea is uncommon, but soft stools are common.
 - ~Intermittent soft stools are normal, soft stools will commonly be at night and hard stools during the day
 - ~Sudden diet change or low fiber diet may cause persistent diarrhea, introduce new foods slowly and follow diet recommendations listed above
- ~Pasteurellosis: Signs commonly seen are runny nose, loss of appetite, decreased activity, abnormal head posture, skin lesions
- ~Fur mite: Causes excessive hair loss and dander