

Care & Information Sheet



Rabbits

There are several types of rabbits: with the exception of their looks and size they all have similar care requirements. With proper care and nutrition they can live up to 10 or more years. Rabbits are very intelligent, affectionate and social animals. They will require daily interaction with humans or should be kept with other rabbits. Rabbits spayed or neutered by a veterinarian tend to be healthier, live longer and are better companions. In addition it will prevent additional unwanted rabbits. Always exercise caution when handling a rabbit, make sure you are fully supporting the body, especially the hind legs. It is best to play with them while sitting on the floor.

Habitat

- Habitat should be at least four times the size of the rabbit, escape-proof and have a section with a solid surface.
- Use baby gates or an indoor play yard during play time, while house training or if your house is not yet rabbit-proof.
- Many house plants are toxic to rabbits and a rabbit should not eat grass treated with pesticides.
- They will do well in the average household temperature, not to exceed 80°F. Avoid extreme temperature changes and you should never keep their habitat in direct sunlight or in a drafty area.
- Clean the habitat and its contents at least once a week with mild soap and water, rinse, and allow to dry completely before placing the rabbit back into the habitat.

Bedding

- 1–2 inches of bedding should be placed in the habitat.
- Proper bedding includes hardwood shavings and a pelleted or recycled product.
- Cedar-based products are not recommended as they may cause harm to your new pet.
- Wet bedding should be removed daily. Provide all new bedding once a week.
- Rabbits can also be trained to use a cat litter box.

Food & Water

- High-quality rabbit food and small amounts of fruits & vegetables. Provide timothy hay at all times.
- Treats should not exceed 10% of total food intake. Avoid sugar and high fat treats.
- Do not feed chocolate, caffeine or alcohol as these can cause serious medical conditions.
- Small amounts of fruits & vegetables can be offered as a treat but should be discarded if not consumed within 24 hrs.
- Clean, fresh, filtered, chlorine-free water changed daily.

Grooming and Hygiene

- Rabbits rarely need to be bathed. If necessary you may bath them using shampoo designed for rabbits and kittens.
- Clean outside the ears frequently with a cotton ball.

Supplies

Habitat	Water Bottle	Timothy Hay
Bedding	Ceramic Food Dish	Chew Sticks
Toys	Quality Food	Indoor Play Yard
Litter Box / Litter	Vitamins	Book about Rabbits

Health

Because all rabbits are potential carriers of infectious diseases, always wash your hands before and after handling your rabbit and/or the habitat contents to help prevent the potential spread of diseases.

You should consult with an exotic animal veterinarian if you observe any of the following conditions.

- Diarrhea or loose stools - caused by poor diet, stress, internal parasites, unclean housing, or other illness.
- Heat Stroke-Emergency condition; symptoms include heavy panting, seizures & loss of consciousness. Can be fatal.
- Malocclusion - Overgrown teeth which may need to be trimmed regularly.
- Mites - External parasites that cause the rabbit to lose patches of hair.
- Tumors – Abnormal lumps under the skin.

For information regarding rabbits and disease, contact the Center for Disease Control at <http://www.cdc.gov/healthypets>

NOTE: The information contained in this document is for general reference only. Please consult a veterinarian for medical advice and concerns.

Sources: Choosing a Small Mammal by Dennis Kelsey-Wood
House Rabbit Handbook by Marinell Harriman