

Greetings

HELLO!

HELLO!

HI!



HOWDY!



Bunny 101



***You do what you know
And when you know better
You do better
Maya Angelou***



Don't Shop - Adopt

Why adopt a ARR Rabbit?

- Neutered/spayed and vetted
- Matched to family needs
- Up-to-date education
- Realistic expectations
- Immediate support network
- Help with bonding rabbits
- When you adopt from us, you save *two lives*!



The Commitment!

**The lifespan of a properly
cared for House Rabbit is
10 years or more!**

- Anecdotal evidence suggests up to 98% of children will lose interest in just *3 to 6 months*
- Adults in the family need to want the bunny and be responsible for the care for the bunny for life – not the child
- Sadly, in many cases, this results in the adopted rabbit being returned to the shelter
- Other top reasons for surrender: Moving, Allergies, Pregnancy, Housing not allowing pets, Rabbit not getting enough attention, Can't care for rabbit any longer



The Facts

Today – We will cover

- Spay / Neuter
- Feeding (Young and Adult)
- Housing
- Exercising
- Socializing
- Health
- Maintenance



Spay & Neuter

Why should you Spay and Neuter?

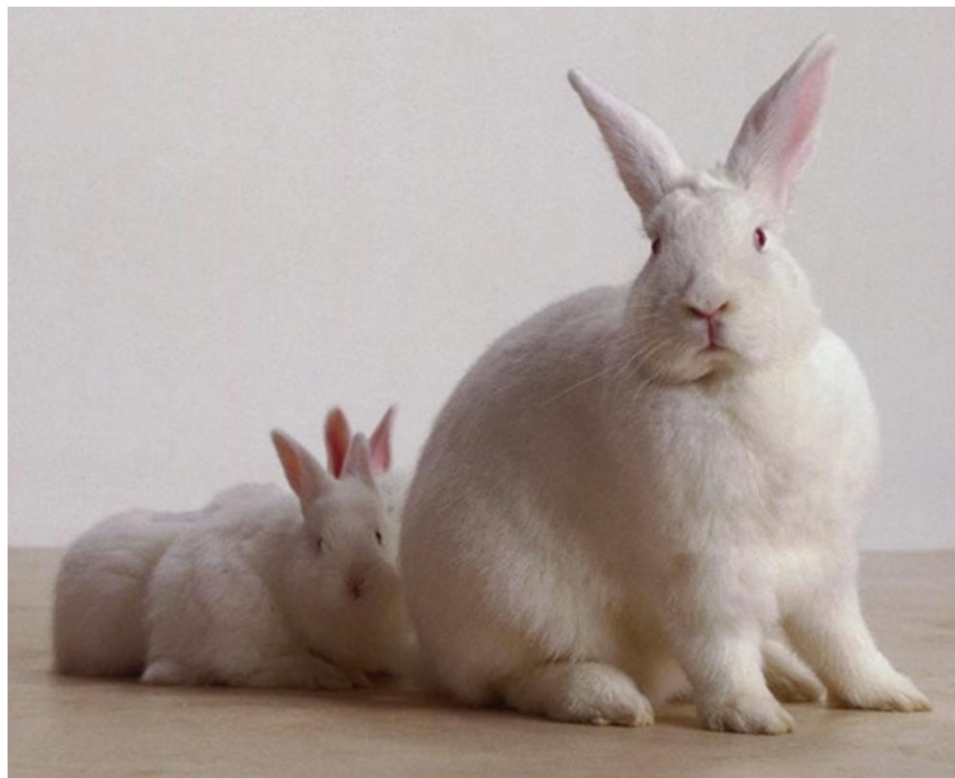


Besides the obvious reason!



Studies Show

**60-85% of unspayed female rabbits will get
ovarian, uterine and/or breast cancer
by 3 years of age**



**Altered rabbits tend to be less aggressive.
Less biting, lunging, circling or growling.**



This one was NOT neutered!



Altered Rabbits

Easier to litter box train, healthier and happier



They beg you to help them



Not
Altered



Altered

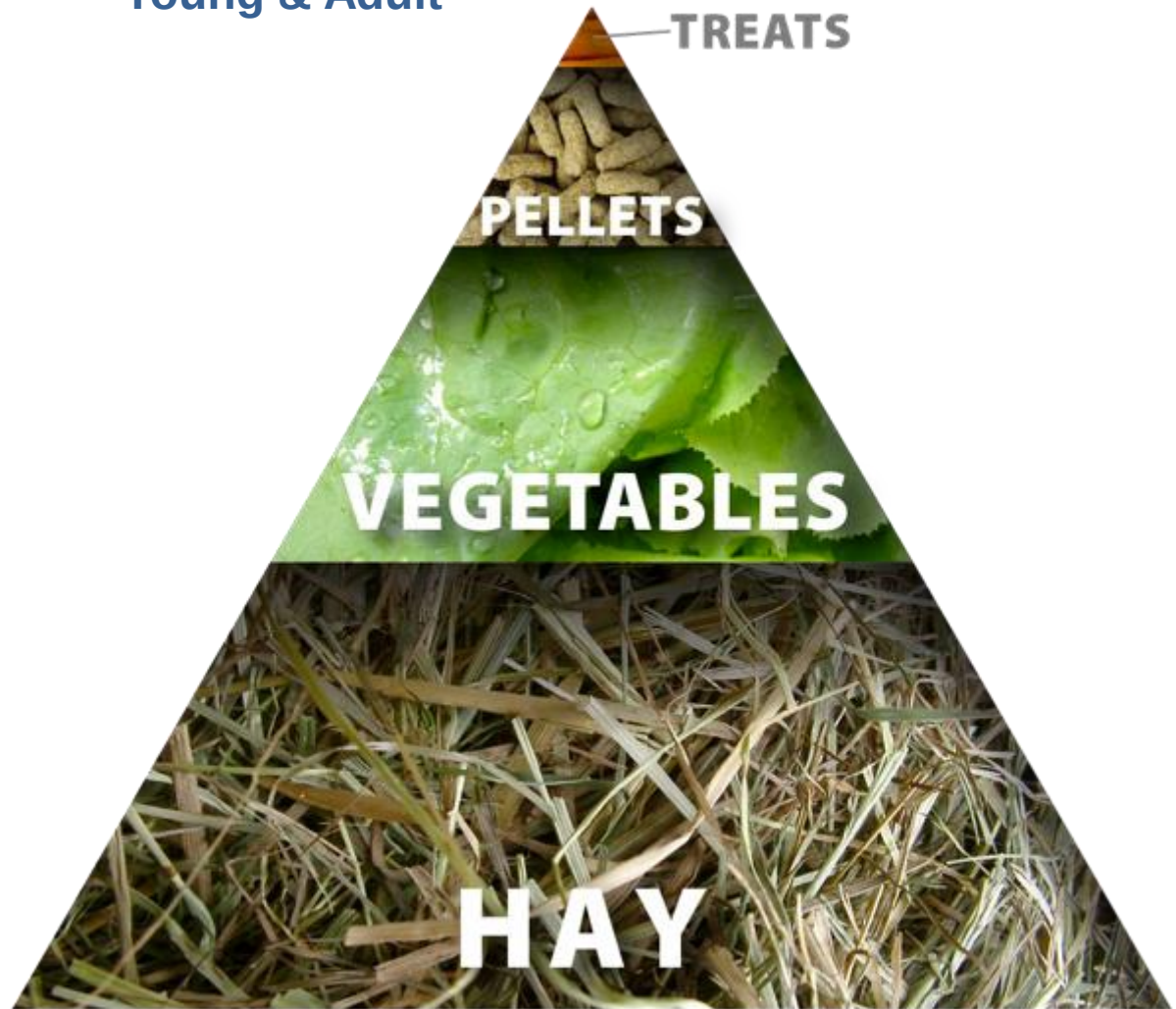
Well, not quite
this clean – LOL!
Bunnies do like to
rearrange and
also leave a few
tokens of
appreciation.

Spay/neuter aftercare >>>



Feeding

Young & Adult



photos from freedigitalphotos.net © keattikorn (pellets); morguefile.com © Alvimann (lettuce/ carrot) DuBoix (hay)

Rabbits are Herbivores
They consume only plant based foods

Rabbit Food Pyramid

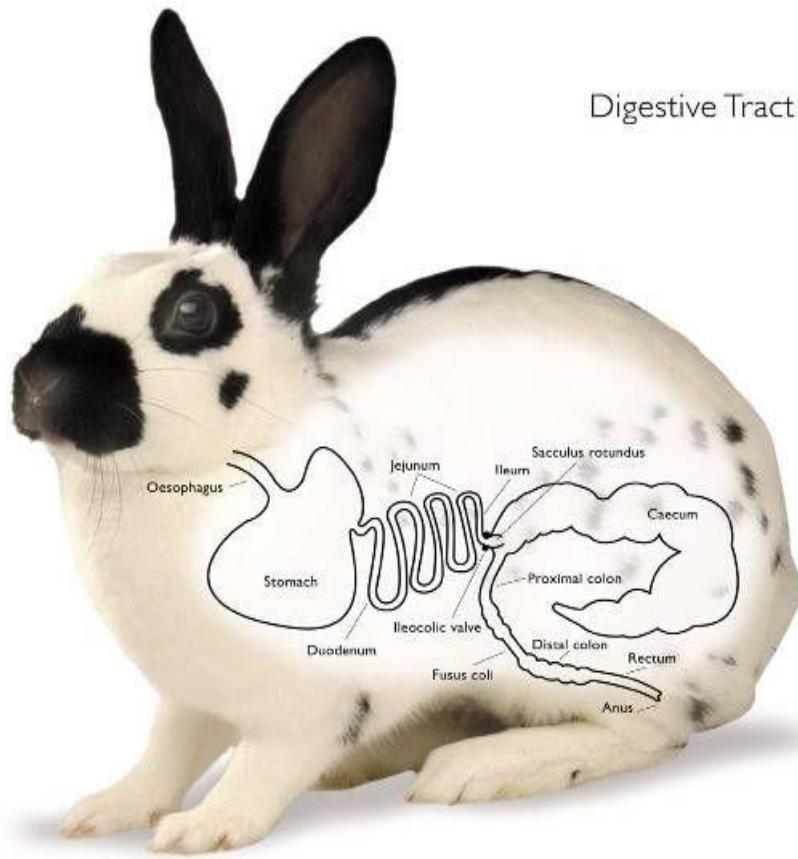
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RESCUE



Why is Hay So Important?

- **Hay has the FIBER that keeps food/fluids moving**
- Digestion starts in the **Stomach** and the ingesta continues to move through the **Small Intestine, Cecum** (hindgut), **Colon** and out – This is called Gastro-Intestinal Motility (GIT)
- Rabbits cannot regurgitate/vomit – **Motility is crucial to prevent gas/stasis/blockages**
- **Rabbits must continually ingest food/fluids (at least every 12 hours) to ensure motility**

Digestive Tract of the Rabbit



- **The Ultimate Goal > Fecals and Cecals**
> produced from a fermentation process in the hindgut and then out the colon and anus



Fecals are mostly fiber and can be recycled as great fertilizer for gardens



Cecals are re-ingested as nature's way to recycle the nutrients in their food

Read about Gastro-Intestinal Illness

>>>



Feeding Hay

Provide Fresh Timothy or Grass Hays



In Large
Unlimited
Quantities
Everyday!

Timothy Hay

- For adults and babies
- Considered the most nutritious
- Grows best in cold, dry climates
- Should be 65-75% of Bunny's diet

Alfalfa Hay

- For babies, underweight, sick or long-haired rabbits - NOT adults
- Alfalfa is a legume hay and contains protein & calcium for growing muscle, bones & teeth
- Can cause obesity, kidney/bladder stones/sludge in adults



- **Additional Grass Hays:** Orchard, Meadow, Oat, Brome, Bermuda, Clover

- Rabbits like to eat hay while in their litter boxes
Hay fiber helps move everything on out!

All you need to know about hay >>>



Feeding Greens

Important Tips

- Always feed fresh greens – wilted, rotten or yellowed greens can cause toxic/digestive distress resulting in stasis
- Serving very wet helps bunny get more fluid
- Feed 3 or more different greens daily for maximum nutrition
- Wash greens thoroughly to remove pesticides
- Organic greens have become more affordable
- Introduce new greens slowly to enable the bunny to develop digestive enzymes
- Should be about 15 -20 % of Bunny's diet

An approx. amount to feed a 5 pound rabbit:

1/2 bunch of parsley and cilantro,
A large leaf of Romaine and Kale
And a few herbs such as mint, basil
etc. if you have them



Recommended Greens

- Romaine & leafy green lettuce
- Cilantro
- Parsley
- Basil
- Mint
- Carrot Tops
- Other Fresh Herbs



Also Kale, Collards, Broccoli, etc. can be added sparingly if Bunny tolerates without problems

A Word about Carrots and Fruit **SUGAR**

- Sugary treats can cause severe digestive illness in rabbits
- Feed carrots and fruits
In very small amounts
as treats
- Bananas and Grapes are
too high in sugar and should not be fed



A complete list is available at:



Tips For Making Greens Last Longer



1

Remove any ties or rubber bands and cut away ends and anything rotting or yellowing



2

Air dry the greens



3

Line plastic bags with paper towels and layer the produce

4

Leave bags open and refrigerate for several hours or overnight

5

Remove as much air as possible without damaging and close bag

Now, when ready to serve, wash thoroughly and serve very wet on a plastic or ceramic plate, if possible, to help keep the water on the greens – for a great recipe for removing pesticides

Click here >>>>>>



Feeding Pellets



Pellets are a **SMALL** part of bunny's diet



Overfeeding pellets will lead to obesity and health problems



Do NOT Feed pellets containing *nuts, seeds or corn* such as Kaytee Fiesta, Bonanza, Hartz

They can make your bunny very sick and it can be life threatening

Quality Pellets are made from two kinds of Hay
Timothy and Alfalfa

What Should I Feed My Bunny? >>>



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Alfalfa Hay Pellets

Feed to Baby and Young Rabbits

- Feed unlimited amounts to baby buns
- Providing higher protein content => 17%
- Adjust Bunny's diet as they age to a lower protein =<14%
- Always transition slowly
- If feeding to adult rabbits:
 - Limit to ¼ cup per 5 lbs. for adults
 - Limit to 1/8 cup if bun is overweight
- Elderly, sick, pregnant, nursing and certain long-haired breeds (Angoras) may need alfalfa pellets

Important

Know your bun's age, weight, breed, health and adjust pellets accordingly



Care and feeding of baby bunnies

>>>

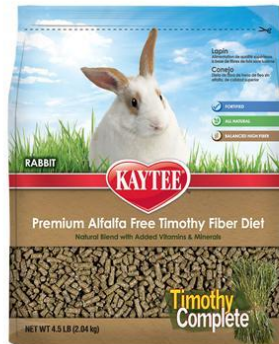


Timothy Hay Pellets

Feed to Adult Rabbits

- Lower in protein =< 14%, Higher in fiber => 20 %
- Feed in limited amounts to healthy adult and normal weight rabbits
- Allow 1/4th to 1/3rd cup per 5 lbs. for adults, Less if the bun is overweight
- Always transition slowly

Know your bun's age, weight, breed, health and adjust pellets accordingly



Important Tips on Feeding Pellets

- Consult with your Vet or one of our Adoption Educators for what to best feed your bunny at what stage in life
- Rabbit's digestive system needs time to develop the enzymes necessary to digest new foods
- ***Always*** know the brand of pellets you are currently feeding your rabbit
- **If Changing Your Bunny's pellets – Use this Transition Formula:**
 - ❖ ***Once a week, swap 1 tablespoon of the new pellets out with 1 tablespoon of the old pellets then second week 2 Tbl. until you reach a 50/50 mix - If bunny has no digestive issues it safe to serve 100%***



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Recommended Treats

- ✓ A Treat Check Morning and Night
Can Save A Bunny's Life



**Papaya
Unsulphured**



**Probios Horse
Biscuits**



**Exact
Kaytee Rainbow**



**Oxbow Timothy
& Veggie Treats**



Willow and Kudzu
Feed fresh or dried – if wilting they are toxic
Willow is excellent for sick/anorexic bunnies



Apple Branches



NO Human Treats or Snacks
Eating breads, popcorn, cereals, potato chips, candy, chocolate etc.
can kill your bunny



Water

Fresh, Clean & Tasty

Water is vital to the health of your bunny



Plenty of fresh, clean water must be available at all times.

Well, Duh! You may be thinking – it is for all of us animals

So – What makes rabbits so special?



The Answer Is.....

**Rabbits are calcium excretors
Fluid is an important part of their diet
to help avoid kidney & bladder problems**



***Dried urine
with sludge***



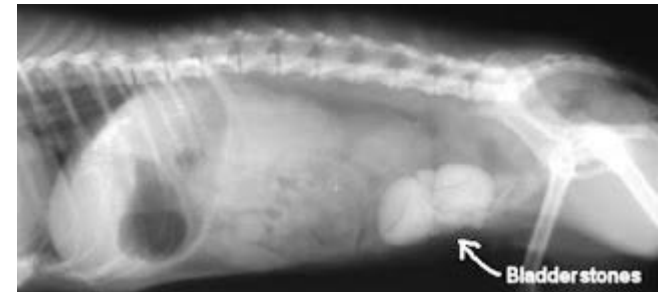
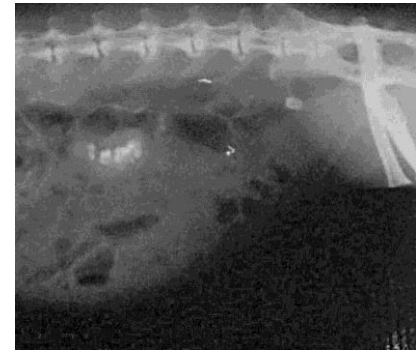
***Urine
starting
to develop
sludge***



Sludge



**Calcium Stone in
the Urethra**



Medical Article >>>



Provide a Water Bowl not a Water Bottle



**There are NO
water bottles
In nature**



Give Water in a heavy crock

- Easier to clean/wash daily
- Not able to flip over
- Rabbits drink more
- *Water bowl = better health*



Rabbits do not like the taste of chlorine and will drink more water if it is filtered or bottled - less expensive than vet bills



Housing



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Rabbits **MUST** Be Housed Indoors

Housing Outdoors is a Death Sentence From:

- **Predators** such as dogs, cats, hawks, raccoons, snakes, rats and humans
- **Insects** such fleas, ticks and flies
- **Parasites/Diseases**—Bot fly and other diseases from cats, raccoons
- **Poisoning** from pesticides, fertilizers, insecticides
- **Fear** from smells and sounds such as lawnmowers, blowers, animals, people and fireworks
- **Extreme Weather** – over 85 degrees kills and cold lowers immunity
- **Outdoor Exercise** brings death from predators, road hazards, pesticides and escape
- **Neglect** causes depression as they are ignored, forgotten, given dirty water, little food and no love
- **Out of Site/Out of Mind** – more likely to overlook illness, or emergency needs



Predators

No such thing as a predator-proof Habitat outside – they find a way



Bot Fly

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Fly Strike



Basic Housing Needs



No wire bottom or plastic floors
wire causes sore hocks >>>
and plastic causes splay legs
Both very painful conditions



Your bunny's habitat must be in an air conditioned and heated area of the home
> 65 degrees and < 80 degrees is best



<<< Use carpet tiles, rugs, and canvas drop cloths for traction

Add a ceramic tile for some cool comfort >>>

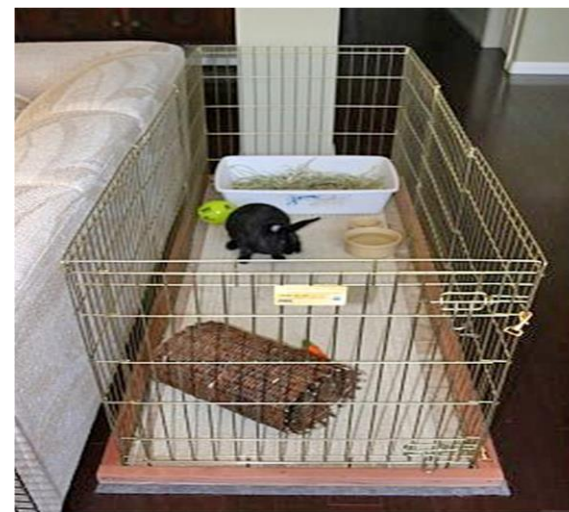
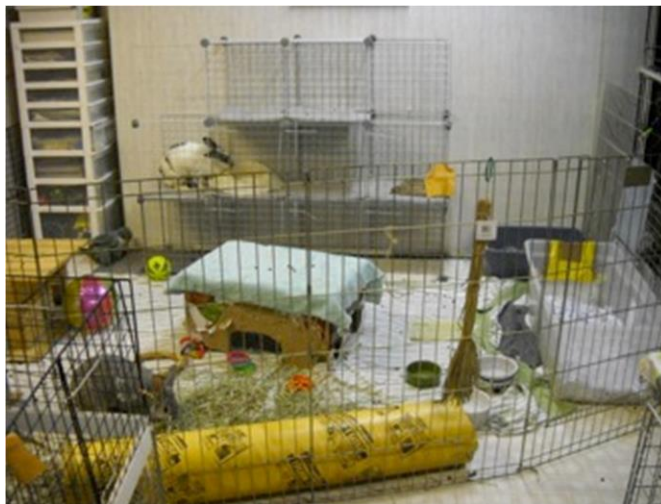


Housing & Supplies >>>



Housing Options

A Home of Our Own!



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Your Rabbit's Litter Box



Use a large litterbox for most rabbits
A bonded pair will want to share



Too small - even babies
can jump in a big one

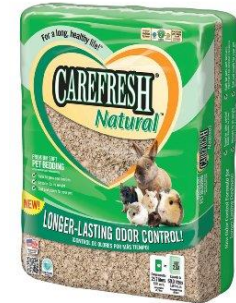


Pine pellets



Wood Stove Pellets

Safe Litters



Any Unscented Paper Based Litters
Without any additives, baking soda!

Do NOT Use

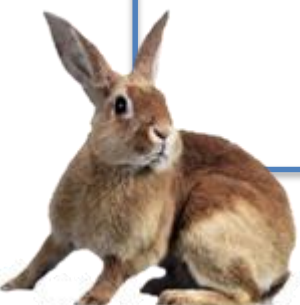
Cedar or Shavings

These can cause
Liver Damage, Respiratory and
Skin Problems

Do NOT USE

Clumping or Clay Cat Litters Silica/Gel, Wheat, Corn Cob

These can cause Lethal
Blockages
and can be toxic



Litter Box Tips



Believe it or not, bunnies love to eat their hay as they are doing their business – It's a good thing!

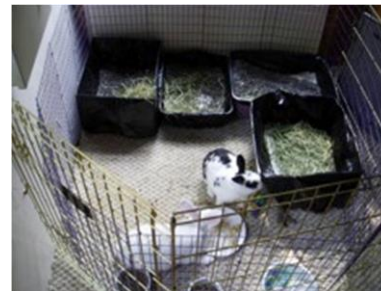
Refresh hay in a corner of the box twice a day – cover up old poops with the leftover hay.



**Separate Hay & Litter
Great for Angoras,
Long haired buns**



**Handicap or
Elder
Bun Litter Box**



Litter Box Training



Litter Box Digging



Litter Box Setup Example and Cleaning



A large litter box
33 gallon garbage bag
Newspaper (free!)
*(Note: If bunny eats plastic
do not use this technique)*



Add Safe Litter
Hay and Buns!



Cleanup is Easy

White Vinegar – Oh, the Joy!

Even when not using the above technique cleaning urine from a litter box or anything else is easy using WHITE VINEGAR

It has the opposite PH of Bunny Urine so it becomes Neutralized
White Vinegar works on litter boxes, floors, carpet, sofas, etc.
A very, safe, green and natural cleaner



Bunny Proofing

Life Threatening



**House plants
can be poisonous**

**Do not allow your
rabbits to eat them**

**For a list of toxic
plants please refer to
this link:**

<http://rabbit.org/poisonous-plants/>



Wires
**All bunnies love
to chew wires**
They are Bunny Crack!



Fixed with Binder clips and Velcro



**Corrugated tubing can be found at Home
Depot, computer, pet or auto supply stores**



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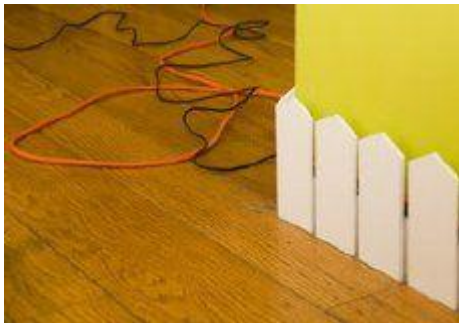
**oh well...
you should have paid
more attention to me.**



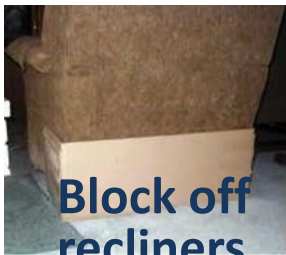
Bunny Proofing Home Threatening



Protect baseboards with 1x6 or 1x8 and two finishing nails from Home Depot



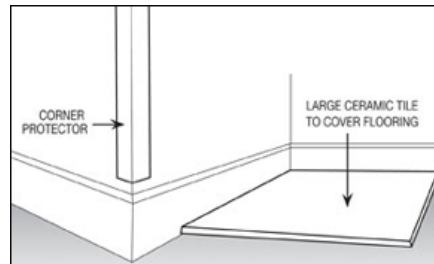
Cute way to protect baseboards & wires



Block off recliners



Stop your Rabbit
chewing your home
Make it safe



Ceramic tile will protect carpet from digging and provide a cool place for bunny to rest



Hide your remote controls
– buns love buttons



Exercise pens and NIC cubes are good for blocking off areas



Buy 1x6's, stain to floor or wood color
Measure, cut and screw 3 or 4 sides together
Place sofa, chair or bed over the frame!

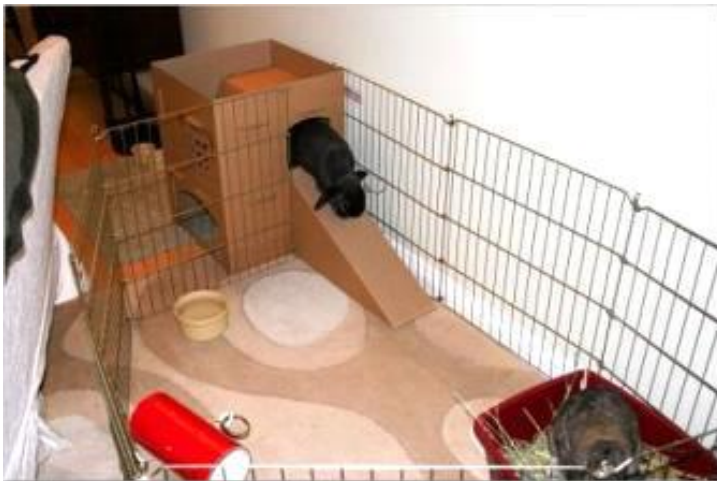
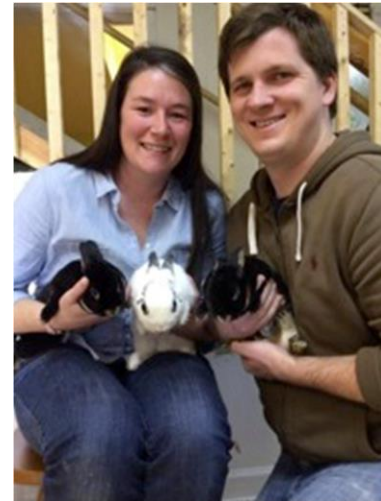
Bunny Proofing >>>



Bringing Bunny Home

It is best to have housing and supplies set up before bringing bunny home

- Pen or equivalent large housing
- Treats / Toys
- Litter box and litter
- 2 crock bowls (food / water)
- Floor covering
- <http://imgur.com/a/w4Hg8>
- Hay /Greens/Pellets



Read *About Your First House Rabbit*
Acclimating bunny to their new environment
Having a dedicated area that is all their own >>>



A very important article to help you understand
Bunny's First Few Weeks in a New Home
and the Importance of not picking up
bunny the first two weeks >>>



Read about *Building Trust* >>>



Our Forever home – We are so lucky!



Exercise

**Your Rabbit needs at least 3-4 hours of exercise time
outside of their habitat every day**



**These are Binkies!
Happy, Hoppy
Bunny!**

**Rabbits have powerful back legs that are built for running, kicking and leaping.
The ancestors of our domestic pet rabbits (the European Rabbit) had a normal
territorial space of about 2 acres for running, finding food and mates.**



Daily Rabbit Exercise

- Burns fat
Obese and cannot clean themselves urine, cecals and fecals will collect on the body and feet causing urine scald and ulcerations called sore hocks
- Strengthens bones
- Strengthens muscles, including the heart and lungs
- It stimulates internal organs, urinary and GI function
Rabbits that exercise will urinate and defecate frequently.
Holding urine can contribute to “sludge” in the bladder
Holding Fecals can contribute to GI slowdown
- Reduces or eliminates cage bar pulling that causes incisor damage and fur chewing and/or over-grooming self or a mate



**When allowed more freedom and exercise,
lethargic rabbits “bloom” into delightful,
playful creatures and aggressive rabbits
Become much calmer.
All Become Happier and Hoppier!**



Socializing

Rabbits Love People



**It is not unconditional!
They need time and patience
to get to know you!**



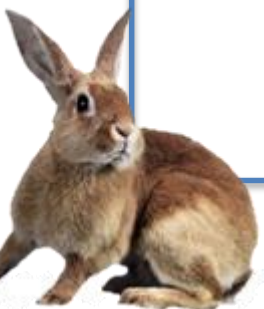
**They are “crepuscular”
meaning they are most active
at dawn and dusk**



**It is all about
building trust!**



Games To play with your bunny >>>



Socializing With Dogs

Go Slowly – introduce carefully over many weeks
Make sure bun has a hidey box
Dog **MUST** be completely voice trained and on leash
Allow to meet while bun is in pen and dog is secured
Watch carefully for any aggression or fear
Only allow dog and bun to interact if no aggression or fear
Never allow bunnies and dogs together unsupervised
Detailed in the article – please read!



Large buns do best

This Will Take Time and Patience!



Introducing dogs to rabbits >>>



Socializing with Cats



Keep the cats nails trimmed – the claws harbor bacteria

Give Rabbit a safe place to get away

Do not force – go slowly

Allow cat and bunny to meet while you hold them

Never allow bunnies and cats to be alone together



Extremely Important – If the bunny is scratched or bitten, start antibiotics and see your vet immediately! – This is life threatening!



Introducing cats to rabbits >>>>



Bunny Bonding

Every Bun Needs a True Love



We do bonding introductions at the Center to find your bunny a friend at no charge. We also have a **Boarding to Bond** option for those Who prefer to have the bonding done before buns come home!



This is an example of a set up for Bonding 2 rabbits – exchanging The rabbits every day to get used To each others smells, etc.



Bonding Rabbits >>>

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Rabbit Communication

- **Head Flat on Floor – pet me now!**
 - or it can mean that the bunny is fearful if the entire body is lowered to the floor
- **Kicking – they are upset or disgusted with you**
 - they flip out their back legs when they hop away
- **Growling / Grunt / Bark – they are upset and aggressive**



- **Licking – this is affection and bonding with you – They are grooming you and want you to groom them back!**

Speaking Rabbit >>>



The Language of Rabbits >>>



More Rabbit Communication



**Back turned to you
Bunny is ignoring you
(Bunny Butt)**



Talk to the butt
'cause the ears
ain't listening!

**Chinning objects marks
their territory >**



**Bunny Ears are like
Radar – they pick up
all sounds from all
directions!**



**< Ears forward – they are alert or alarmed and
ready to attack if necessary**

**Ears back – they are stressed and
may be thinking about an attack >**



More Rabbit Communication



Bunny on top is the “boss”

- **Buzzing or humming sound** – The bunny is most likely feeling romantic some bunnies do it a lot but most do not
- **Nose bumps** – The bunny is asking you to play with or pet her!
- **Thump with back feet** – The bunny is alarmed or angry it can also be wanting attention!
- **Soft teeth grinding** – This is the rabbit equivalent of purring very happy!
- **Loud teeth grinding** – If the grinding is very loud, the rabbit can be in pain or have a dental issue – see a vet immediately
- **Scream** – This signifies extreme mortal fear or extreme pain



Toys and Play



Every bunny needs a box with 2 holes cut into it, a toy to toss and something to chew!



For more ideas visit us at alabamahrs.org



Health

The Key to a Long Life!



Home Health Exam

A great way to bond with your bunny
Do at least once a week or more often

**Examine Ears, Eyes, Nose, Front Teeth, Skin, Fur, Bottoms of Feet,
Bunny “Privates” and notice anything different or problematic**

**Everyday, check your bun’s entire body
for any lumps or bumps
from head to tail**

You can be a lifesaver!

**Rabbits have very small lungs
Second hand smoke can cause
cancer, pneumonia and other
respiratory illnesses**



**Their sense of smell is much
stronger than ours
They appreciate no strong
perfumes or lotions**



**Rabbits have fragile bones
Picking up a rabbit must be done
carefully to avoid broken bones
which can result in amputation**



Read the “Care Articles” [here](#) >>>



How To Pick Up and Hold a Rabbit

You Must Know How for Health, Medical, and Maintenance Reasons

Rabbits are prey animals and most of them do not like to be held.



Know These Life Saving Emergency Protocols

1. Observation

You know your bun best

2. Temperature – Practice how to take it before an illness

Normal is: 101-103 degrees - warm bunny if below 101 – shock occurs

Above 103 – indicates possible infection

Only use a flexible thermometer (locate the anus)

*Live demo also at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=228mi-UqRX0>

3. Hydration – You can always offer your bun water with a syringe

Be careful not to aspirate by doing only 1 ml at a time from the side of the mouth and ensuring bunny is swallowing

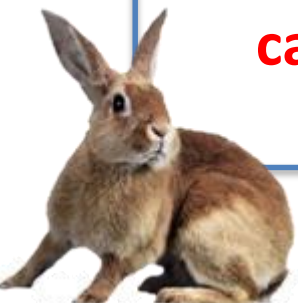
Under vet authorization -
Bunny may need sub-q
and/or IV fluids to regain
motility and control stasis



This technique
also works
for giving any
oral medication

**ALWAYS seek veterinarian
care as soon as possible!**

How to take your bunny's temperature >>



Health and Emergency Care at Home

When your bunny does not eat (at least every 12 hours),
It is a life-threatening emergency
Shutdown, Stasis, Gastrointestinal Illness, Ileus

- Keep Simethicone (Baby Gasx or Mylicon drops) on hand at all times for gas in the tummy!
- Buy time to get your bun vet care
- Rescue Remedy can help stressed buns (and their humans!)
- Call your adoption coordinator if you are unsure of bun's needs
- Medirabbit.com is a great resource for health questions



IMPORTANT: Ensure your bunny sitters know bunny care information and that rabbits must eat every twelve hours – do not leave buns alone for even a day as it is extremely important to keep their eating and pooping monitored! ***This can save their life!***



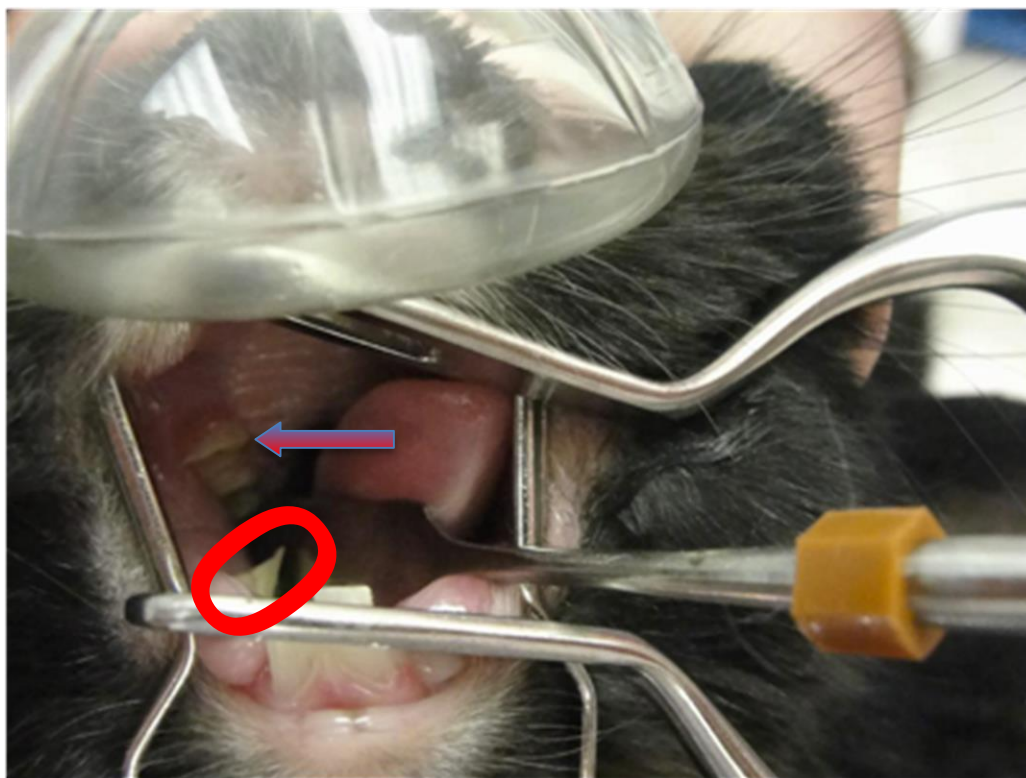
Life Saving Emergency Information >>>



Teeth

Very Important Information

- Points on the teeth can and do lead to your bunny not eating
- Not taking a treat, not eating, can be the first sign of trouble
- This is an emergency and you need to get to a rabbit savvy vet immediately!



A rabbit cannot open their mouth wide enough for a vet to check the back teeth

To check the back teeth and fix the problem, the bunny will need to be under anesthesia

Vet Care of Rabbit Teeth >>>



More Scoop on the Poop!



Can be different sizes and colors – you want to see lots of hay in the fecals



Should be friable
Fall apart with gentle pressure



This is fur/hair being removed
Bunny may need more fluid
Keep a close watch

Poop Matters! Check litter box daily
Lots of Poops (200-300 daily)
Bunny is eating and healthy

Guide to Bunny Poop >>>



The Mystery of Poop >>>



Sluggish Motility in the
Gastrointestinal Tract >>>



Choose Only Experienced Rabbit Veterinarians

- Rabbit Savvy vets are frequently referred to as “Exotic Vets” and this is a licensed specialty
- Rabbit Savvy vets have extensive experience working with rabbits

Choose Carefully

- Interview a new vet carefully. Vets that see at least 20 rabbits a month should be more experienced
- Domestic rabbit veterinary medicine is not something that is taught in depth or even taught at every vet school - *any vet can say they treat rabbits whether they have taken continuing educational classes on rabbit care or not*
- *While these vets may be well-meaning, rabbits do not get the vet care they need and many die unnecessarily*



List of rabbit experienced vets >>>



Maintenance

Grooming & Nail Clipping Must Be Done Often

Important!
NEVER use
Frontline
(or any over the
counter products)
For fleas / ticks



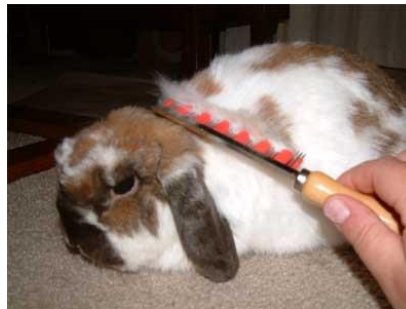
Frontline Kills Rabbits
We call if the "F" word

Bunny's shed
about 4 times
a year



**They need loose fur/hair removed for
*Their health and Your Well-being***

Hair Buster & Furminator
Great grooming tools



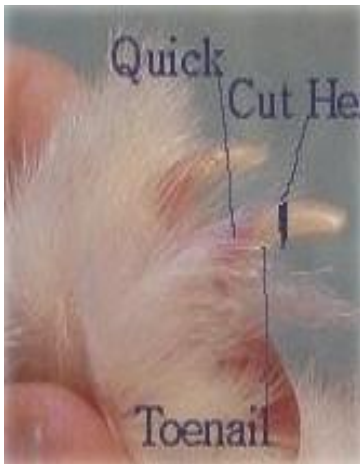
Grooming your Rabbit >>>

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Tips For Nail Trimming

Nails must be cut at least every two months!



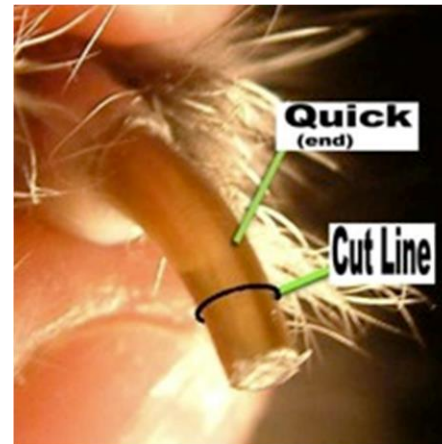
Trimming nails often helps reduce the vein (quick)

Tipping the nails on young bunnies can also ensure that the vein does not get too long

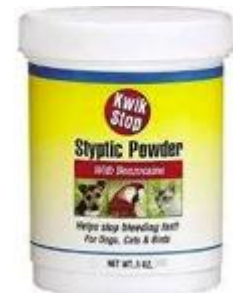


Long nails cause pain inhibit movement and can cause severe deformities to the toes and foot

Rabbits can catch their nails in carpet and pull out entire toe!



Dark nails may need a backlight



Styptic powder, flour, cornstarch, and pressure will all stop bleeding



The End



ALABAMA RABBIT
RESCUE