



Rabbit Diet and Husbandry

Cats and Critters
23 Somerton St.
Rochester, NY 14607

585-442-4373
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Hay	Timothy Hay www.oxbowanimalhealth.com
<p>Timothy Hay should be 90-95% of an adult rabbit's diet. Oxbow Hay offers high quality timothy hay.</p>	
<p>Alfalfa Hay is rich in calories and calcium. It should be fed to babies (< 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.</p>	
<p>Other hays: Orchard Grass, Oat Hay, Bunny Brome, Botanical Hay</p> <p>These hays can be offered if your rabbit won't eat timothy hay.</p>	

*The quality of hay varies more than you might think. Make sure your hay is **green & smells fresh** before buying.*

Pellets	Bunny Basics-T
<p>Timothy-based pellets are recommended for adults. ¼ cup per four pounds daily should be offered. Bunny Basics-T is a high quality timothy-based pellet. Other Brands: American Pet Diner Timmy Rabbit Pellets.</p>	
<p>Alfalfa-based pellets are recommended for babies (<4 months old) and nursing and pregnant mothers. Bunny Basics 15/23 is a high quality alfalfa-based pellet.</p>	
<p>Most pellets purchased at pet stores are alfalfa-hay based. Make sure you check the ingredients before buying. <u>No seeds or treats mixed in!</u></p>	

Fresh Produce	Avoid these vegetables:
<p>Vegetables: Parsley, carrots, red and green leaf lettuces, dandelion greens, cilantro</p>	<p>Too high in calcium: Kale, mustard greens, turnip greens, collard greens, spinach, carrot tops</p>
<p>Fruits: Apple slices, banana slices, strawberries can be fed in very small amounts.</p> <p><i>*Sick animals should not be fed fruit or anything high in sugar.</i></p>	<p>No nutritional value: Iceberg lettuce, cucumbers, celery. These can cause diarrhea/soft stools.</p> <p>Gas producing: Cruciferous vegetables like broccoli</p>

Housing	www.rabbit.org
<p>Habitats: Suggested minimum housing requirements are at least 6 times the length of your stretched out rabbit (30"x30"x24" for 5-6 lb.). 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 be high enough for the rabbit to stand on its hind feet.</p> <p>Exercise pens (ex-pens): A great alternative to traditional cages, sold for either dogs or ferrets. A way to set up is to put down a waterproof barrier (such as a vinyl remnant or tile board), with a blanket or fleece on top for soft bedding. Ex-pens are low cost, portable, multi configurable and are easy to clean.</p> <p>Other Alternatives: X-large dog crate, build your own grid cage (NICubes), section off a rabbit proof area of your home, Custom built rabbit condos.www.leithpetwerks.com.</p>	
<p><u>Habitat Accessories:</u></p> <p>Water Bottle and/or Heavy Crock for Water/ Pellets</p> <p>Hay Container</p> <p>Sheepskin/Blankets</p> <p>Litter pan: A pan with a high back and low side's works best. Use litter that is either paper or hay based. Use vinegar diluted with water (4:1) to dissolve urine sediment.</p> <p>Hiding Spot: A cardboard box, tube, or an untreated wicker/wooden house.</p> <p>Toys: untreated wicker baskets, large bird toys, plastic slinkies, cardboard rolls, grass mat, specially made rabbit toys www.busybunny.com. Toys are important for rabbits psychological/ emotional well being.</p> <p>Exercise Area: Two hours of exercise in a rabbit-proofed area is recommended (cover electrical and phone cords with tubing, remove houseplants as most are toxic if eaten).</p>	<p>Five Freedoms with which all animals should live their lives.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Freedom from hunger and thirst2. Freedom from pain, injury or disease3. Freedom from fear and distress4. Freedom from discomfort5. Freedom to express behaviors that promote well-being
<p>Bunny Proofing: Rabbits are enthusiastic chewers and precautions must be taken to ensure a safe environment. Electrical cords need to be tucked out of reach or covered with PVC. Valuables & Plants should be kept out of reach. A thin strip of untreated wood, Polyethylene tubing, sea grass mats, and blankets or throws all can be used to prevent destructive behavior.</p>	

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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 rabbits benefit greatly from neutering by helping to stop and 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 is not for the faint of heart and must be undertaken with caution as serious injury can occur if the rabbits are not carefully monitored. The House Rabbit Society has helpful articles on their website www.rabbit.org also they produce an excellent video on rabbit introductions.