

Rabbits

Rabbits are active affectionate pets that enjoy being petted. Some rabbits follow their owner and lick your hand like a dog. Rabbits play by running around the room, and will amuse you with their leaping and twisting antics. Because they are so active, they need at least an hour a day out of their cage to play.

Rabbits come in 45 different breeds, from the tiny dwarf breeds, weighing only 2-3 pounds, to the giant breeds that can tilt the scales at 20 pounds! Some have lopped ears, some have short plushy coats, and some have long angora coats.

Rabbits make great interactive pets for adults and older children.

Feeding

Rabbits are strict herbivores. Rabbit pellets make up their main diet. They also need timothy hay for roughage and leafy greens such as dandelion leaves, bok choy, kale, cilantro, parsley and leaf lettuce every day. They can also have carrots, cucumber, apple, oranges, peppers, and other veggies. Treats are great for training and strengthening the bond between you and your rabbit and can comprise 10% of their diet. Care should be taken in introducing fresh veggies to very young bunnies whose digestive tracts are still very sensitive. It is best to wait until your bunny is 3 months old unless you know for sure he/she is already digesting veggies well.

Housing

Rabbits need a cage at least 36" X 24" X 18" tall, and the bigger the better to provide room for them to move around. If the floor is made of wire, provide a solid surface such a board, plastic tray or rug for your rabbit to rest on. Rabbits can be litter box trained. For litter, choose from aspen shavings or those made of recycled paper or organic pellets. Do not use clay litter or cedar shavings. Rabbits kept in the house bond most closely to their owner.

Accessories

Rabbits need a water bottle, a non-tip food dish or hopper, a hayrack and a mineral salt wheel. They enjoy playing with small balls and toys they can pick up and toss. They also enjoy chewing on non-toxic twigs and chew toys.

Sanitation

Clean the litter box as needed, and wash the cage and accessories weekly. Urine deposits can be removed with vinegar. Be sure to scrub all parts of the water bottle.

Maintenance

All rabbits need to be brushed once a week and longhaired rabbits need to be brushed or combed daily. They may also need their toenails trimmed regularly. Be sure to provide hardwood chew toys to prevent your rabbit's teeth from growing too long.

Health Care

Pet rabbits should be spayed or neutered for optimum health and to prevent behavior problems. Veterinary Pet Insurance (www.petinsurance.com) now offers health insurance policies for rabbits.

Special needs

Rabbits do not like to be picked up and instead like to interact with their owner down on the floor. All rooms where your rabbit is allowed to play must be "rabbit-proofed" to protect electrical cords and remove items that you don't want chewed.

Life cycle

Rabbits live an average of 7 to 10 years but can live up to 15 years. The gestation period is 28-31 days and the average litter size is 6. The bunnies open their eyes at 7-10 days and can be weaned at 8 weeks.

Expert Help

If you have questions about your rabbit, do not hesitate to contact us. We will be happy to help you choose a rabbit care book for more complete information. You, your veterinarian, and the staff here at the store will form the team, which will be responsible for your rabbit's well being.

Supplies Needed:

Large cage	Rabbit food
Bedding/litter	Hay rack
Litter box	Timothy hay
Resting platform	Treats
Water bottle	Mineral salt wheel
Non-tip food dish or hopper	Hairball remedy
Toss toys	Nail clippers
Chew toys	Brush and/or comb

This information is brought to you by the Pet Professionals at:

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