

Shopping list for your new rabbit:

- Stand-up wire pen or spacious cage
- Water bottle or ceramic crock
- Litter box(es) and compressed paper litter
- Timothy or orchard grass hay
- Timothy or alfalfa pellets



- Fresh vegetables
- Apple sticks, sea grass mats, or cardboard to chew on

- Plastic tubing for covering electrical cords
- Grooming brush and small animal nail clippers
- White vinegar for urine accidents and cleaning litter boxes
- Small untreated wood or hard plastic toys

This information compiled by Rabbit Advocates. For more comprehensive information, we recommend the Rabbit Advocate educational literature (available from our website www.rabbitadvocates.org) and *The House Rabbit Handbook* by Marinell Harriman (Drollery Press, 2013).



Rabbit Advocates

Promoting the Welfare of Domestic Rabbits

Contact Us. Call our Helpline,
503-617-1625.

We're happy to answer your questions about rabbit care or about our programs.

Visit our website

www.rabbitadvocates.org

Learn about rabbit care. View adoptable rabbits.

Learn more about our educational programs.

Come to our meetings,

held on the third Sunday most months.

Check our website for time, location, and educational topic of the month.



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A Quick Guide to Rabbit Care



Rabbits are wonderful companions.

They are intelligent, social, and entertaining.

They also require a great deal of care and attention.

Follow the guidelines in this brochure to help keep

your rabbit

healthy

and happy.

Allow your rabbit to live inside with the family.

Your rabbit should be given supervised “free range” time in the house, as well as a spacious cage or standup pen for security and quiet time. There should be enough

room to allow her to stretch out, stand up straight, and move around comfortably, and room for food and water bowls and a litter box. The bigger the cage, the happier your rabbit will be. A cage with a front door or a pen that can be opened allows the rabbit to hop in and out on her own. If the cage has a wire floor, cover all or part of it with cardboard or wood to protect the rabbit’s feet from injury.



Rabbits are athletic, playful animals and even the best cage is no substitute for socialization and exercise. Allow your rabbit several hours outside the cage each day, preferably in the

morning or evening. Conceal or cover all electrical cords and place houseplants out of reach (some are poisonous). Rabbits are natural chewers, so remove valuable objects and offer apple branches, untreated wicker baskets, newspaper, or plain cardboard boxes with holes cut for entry ways.

Spay or neuter your rabbit

at around six months of age. Choose a veterinarian experienced in rabbit care and surgery. Be sure to feed your rabbit her normal diet right up until the surgery: do not withhold food or water. Spaying or neutering helps fight

rabbit overpopulation and also improves litter box habits, eliminates the chance of uterine cancer in females, and decreases territorial aggression.

Litter train your rabbit!

Rabbits catch on quickly to using litter boxes. Place a litter box in the cage and one or two boxes elsewhere around the house. The safest and most absorbent litter is compressed paper. You can also use a layer of newspaper covered with hay or straw. A clump of hay in the litter box may encourage your rabbit to use it. Never use wood shavings, clay litter or clumping litter. They may be harmful to your rabbit’s health.

Learn how to safely lift and hold your rabbit.

The best place to relate to your rabbit is on the floor where she feels safe and secure. There will be times, however, when it is necessary to pick her up. Get down on the ground close to the rabbit and using both hands bring her securely to your body in a horizontal position. Always support, but don’t hold, your rabbit’s back legs when picking her up. Those powerful muscles make it possible for her to kick hard enough to injure herself. It is best that a child not be allowed to pick up the rabbit -- for the child’s, and the rabbit’s, safety.



Give your rabbit healthful and tasty foods.

Provide fresh water at all times in a clean bowl or water bottle, and wash bowls and bottles frequently to prevent bacterial buildup. A proper diet will help to keep your rabbit’s intestinal tract healthy. An adult rabbit should get unlimited timothy hay, a limited amount of high-fiber rabbit pellets, and fresh vegetables daily. Limit the quantity of pellets to prevent weight gain and nutritional and digestive problems. Offer a variety of vegetables such as small pieces



of carrots and their tops and kale, collard greens, parsley, cilantro, broccoli, and dark leaf lettuces. Never feed foods that can cause digestive upset such as iceberg lettuce, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, or snacks high in sugar such as cookies, crackers, or candy. Make any dietary changes slowly.

Pay attention to your rabbit’s health.

Rabbits have sensitive digestive systems. Check the litter box daily to make sure your rabbit is eliminating. Call your rabbit veterinarian right away if your rabbit stops eating, drinking, or eliminating. Brush your rabbit gently to help remove excess fur. Check that her continually growing front teeth are wearing evenly and have not overgrown. Your vet can trim the teeth if necessary. Use small animal nail clippers to trim her toenails periodically. Be careful to avoid cutting them too short. Take your rabbit to the vet for regular checkups. These visits will provide a valuable health record for your rabbit, which is very important should your rabbit become ill.

Most importantly, love your rabbit!

She could live 8-12 years and will bring you and your family great enjoyment.

Remember that your rabbit relies on you for gentleness, kindness, consistency, and concern. May the two of you have a long, happy life together!

