



Is a Rabbit the Right Companion for Me?

Before adopting any pet, it is important to understand his basic nature and what is involved in his care. Too frequently a rabbit is an impulse purchase to satisfy a child when she begs for a pet as if he were a toy. Adorable baby rabbits are often available from pet and feed stores. A baby rabbit is irresistible and easy to hold, but very quickly increases in size and reaches sexual maturity.

Living with a rabbit can be a wonderful experience. The choice to adopt a rabbit must be a carefully considered family decision. The better educated you are about rabbits before the adoption, the better the experience for you, your family, and your rabbit.

■ Rabbits...

Are intelligent, curious, fun loving, quiet, and entertaining.
Are ground loving creatures who prefer not to be picked up.
Need space and exercise.
Live to be eight to twelve years old.
Need a consistently good diet.
Sometimes like to chew and dig and your house will require rabbit proofing.
Have individual personalities.
Are a prey species who hide illnesses, so require immediate medical treatment when illness becomes apparent.
Must be tended to on a daily basis.
Have limited means of communicating with humans that can sometimes include nose nudging, thumping, scratching, growling, or nipping.
Require a social life yet must be allowed time alone.
Are vegetarian.

■ Is a Rabbit a Good Pet for my Children?

Rabbits are sensitive to noise and like a quiet household.
A rabbit is not a good starter pet for a child.
Caring for a rabbit or other pet is the parents' responsibility.
Children sometimes lose interest in their rabbit as they find other interests.

■ Are you or anyone in your family allergic to hay or rabbits?

If so, do you have a plan in place to deal with the allergy?

■ Are you willing to incur vet bills just as you would with other pets?

Do you have other pets?
Is your dog obedient and not a hunter?
Is your cat predatory?
Do you have the time to slowly introduce your new rabbit to other animal members of your household?
Do you have a safe place for your rabbit to be away from other pets if necessary?