



Caring For Your Rabbit

Rabbits are relatively straightforward pets to care for with the right research, and contrary to many misconceptions, they make friendly, intelligent pets. It's important to remember that as a "confined" animal, they will need more cleaning out and hands-on care than

perhaps a cat would. Like all pets they require health care and attention and when the decision has been made to home a rabbit this must be viewed as a long term commitment as Rabbits can live for 6 to 10 years.

Housing

Your rabbit will need a warm, dry and spacious home to live in. The bigger the hutch the happier your rabbit will be. Start with the biggest hutch you can get, to avoid wasting money on an "upgrade" later.

- Your hutch should be a minimum of 3 ft x 3ft (90cm x 90cm), with 2ft (60cm) in height. The hutch needs to be high enough to allow your rabbit to stretch and rear up which is a normal behaviour.
- The hutch should stand on legs, or be placed on bricks/blocks, this giving the rabbit protection from possible predators, and damp rising from the ground.
- A weatherproof, sloping roof is needed to keep out the rain.
- A good hutch will also have an enclosed sleeping area and an open-fronted space for daytime hours.
- Your rabbit will need a food bowl and a water bottle for a constant supply of food and water.
- A supply of fresh hay is needed for your rabbit to sleep in and sawdust is used to cover the floors areas.

A hutch alone is not sufficient housing for a rabbit. Unless you are prepared to move your rabbit across to its run several times a day, you should provide a run that is permanently attached. Your run should be cat proof and have a covered area for protection against the weather. The run needs to be large enough for your Rabbit to hop, Skip and Jump around all day.

Feeding your rabbit:

For a healthy rabbit a mixture of a dry-mix rabbit food, hay and fresh vegetables is recommended. Hay or grass should form 70% + of the rabbit's diet (as in the wild). Any dry mix food is ideally of a brand where all the pellets are balanced the same shape and size—for example Burgess' Supa Rabbit. This will stop the rabbit from "selective feeding", which can be a serious health issue affecting their teeth and digestion

A rabbit will also eat vegetables, such as; Carrots, cabbage, spinach, broccoli, kale, celery, cauliflower.

Handling

Remember to handle your rabbit regularly so he or she continues to be comfortable around you. Your rabbit will need minimum 6 hours a day exercise with toys to play with and chew and boxes, tubes or pipes for him to hide in.

Vaccination & yearly check-up

Rabbits will need yearly vaccinations to protect them against killer diseases such as Myxomatosis and Viral Haemorrhagic Disease. (VHD) As well as the jabs, the vaccination appointment will also look for any obvious health problems including overgrown teeth.

Keep them clean

A clean hutch is essential. Ideally you should clean the hutch every day. A dirty hutch can lead to problems with fly strike and urine scalding, This is where the rabbit will sit in its own droppings and urine which builds up on the back end of the rabbit. Flies will then lay their eggs in this area.

Neutering:

There are too many unwanted rabbits in the UK—please do not breed your rabbit—any babies will take up a home that an unwanted one could have used instead.

Neutering also has many positive outcomes on the rabbit's health, behaviour and demeanour to people. In female rabbits, neutering prevents many life threatening diseases. Please protect your pet by getting her spayed.