

Grooming

Rabbits are very clean animals and groom themselves on a regular basis. They still require grooming from their owners, however. You will need a brush and nail trimmers to properly groom your rabbit.

When grooming, always talk softly to your rabbit and support your rabbit's forelimbs and hind legs. They can be hurt if they become nervous and start kicking.

Environment

Rabbits living inside can roam within the home freely, as long as you have rabbit-proofed the electrical cords. Rabbits like to chew, so purchase an assortment of chew toys for them. Your rabbit can also be taught to use a litter box.

If you would like your rabbit to go outside to get fresh air on a nice day, there are indoor and outdoor hutches that allow your rabbit to safely enjoy the outdoors. You can also take your rabbit on a walk with harnesses and leashes designed for all sizes of rabbits.

If you choose to house your rabbit in a permanent enclosure outdoors, choose a large, well-ventilated hutch that provides adequate shelter. You must allow sufficient time for your rabbit to acclimate to weather conditions. Rabbits should not be exposed to drafts, continuous sunlight, or extreme cold.

The information provided is a basic guide to rabbit care. Contact your veterinarian or rabbit expert for additional information. There are also several excellent books and websites available which will provide more in-depth information on the care of your rabbit.

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About Rabbits

Rabbits make excellent pets. They enjoy being gently handled and petted, and look forward to the attention you give them. They will follow you from room to room as you clean the house, put the groceries away or get ready to leave the house in the morning.

Rabbits have long lives, and tend to live for 7-10 years. They are quiet, can be litter box trained, and taught to interact with the entire family.

Rabbits are available in several breeds, varieties, colors and sizes. The most popular pet rabbits today are the smaller, dwarf breeds such as Netherland Dwarfs, Mini lop ears, Dutch and Polish Dwarfs.

The fun is just beginning as you bring a bunny into your home. They will soon love to play, run, jump and hide.

Housing

A wire cage is the best home for your new rabbit. It should be large enough to compensate for future growth, and a minimum size of 32" wide, 18" deep, and 18" high. A hutch with two compartments is best, one for exercise during the day and the second to nest and hide at night. A cage with a solid floor is best. Keep the cage out of direct sunlight.

Rabbits are very social and love to be with people, so put the cage in a room that has frequent family activity.

What Else Do I Need?

Bedding. Choose a dust-free, highly absorbent bedding for the bottom of the cage. It can be cleaned weekly, as long as daily spot cleaning is performed.

Accessories. Rabbits love to climb and sit up high, so include shelves and ramps in the cage. Also, provide privacy and security for your rabbit by adding a place to hide in their cage. There are several types of rabbit hideouts and shelters available that are easy to clean, or you may use an upside down box. Purchase a corner litter tray as well.

Feeders. Other necessities include a bin feeder and hay manger attached to the side of the cage, which provide hygienic feeding methods.

Handling

Approach your rabbit on his level. Talk to it and let it come to you. Let it sniff the back of your hand. Gently place your hand over its shoulders with your thumb and forefinger. Using your other hand, scoop the rabbit up under its hind legs offering support to its entire body. Place the rabbit in your lap, or hold it close to your chest if you are going to stand.

Diet

Rabbits should be fed twice per day, and should receive fresh water daily.

Your rabbit's staple diet should be well-balanced commercial rabbit food that is high in fiber and low in protein. Do not substitute Guinea Pig or other food pellets. In addition, provide unlimited amounts of timothy-grass and oat or wheat hay. Young rabbits can also have alfalfa hay, but it is too rich in protein and calcium for adult rabbits and can cause digestive disorders. This high fiber diet also encourages teeth grinding, which will keep your rabbits continuously-growing teeth healthy.

Fresh green leafy vegetables are very important for your rabbits nutritional needs. Provide a daily helping of any of the following: dandelion greens, parsley, romaine lettuce, kale, endive, collard greens, carrot tops, and watercress.

Fruits should be restricted or limited. If you decide to give your rabbit fruit, they may have a small portion of high fiber fruits such as apple, pear, papaya, or berries.

Water must be provided daily in a ball-tip water bottle which prevents leakage and soaked bedding. Add a hanging salt lick in the cage to provide necessary minerals. It is also important to provide your rabbit with gnawing material such small animal wood chews and sisal toys. This will keep his teeth in proper alignment.