

WILDSIDE VETERINARY HEALTH CENTER
CARE SHEET: RABBIT



Housing

- Rabbits acclimate well to average household temperatures, not to exceed 80°F. They have very few sweat glands, so they overheat easily at higher temperatures.
- Cages should have a flat bottom (no wire) and should be large enough for the animal to run and hop in any direction. Should be at least four times the size of the rabbit, be escape-proof and have adequate ventilation.
- There also should be plenty of room for exercise and play outside the cage.
- Always provide the largest habitat possible.
- Bedding should be unscented, dye-free. You may use paper-based bedding or fleece. If using paper based, 1–2 inches of bedding should be placed in the habitat.
- A hideaway box should be provided to each rabbit. Boxes can be made from wood, edible materials (such as braided straw or wicker) or cardboard.
- A hay rack can help keep hay or other grasses off the ground and uncontaminated by feces or urine.
- An appropriately sized litter box and small animal litter will allow you to train your rabbit to use a litter box, which can help keep their habitat cleaner.
- Bedding and litter box should be spot cleaned daily to remove soiled material and uneaten food, and the entire habitat and its contents should be cleaned thoroughly at least once a week (more often when there is more than one rabbit in the habitat).

Food and water

- UNLIMITED Grass hay (timothy hay, orchard hay, oat hay, meadow hay). Offering hay is a must for rabbits, not only to help wear down their continuously growing teeth, but also to maintain proper digestive health.
- Plain hay-based pellets - NO seeds, NO nuts or dried fruit should be mixed in. Give 1/4 cup of pellets per 5 lbs of body weight per day.
- Fresh produce like arugula, basil, beet greens, bok choy, cilantro, collards, endive, dill, green leaf lettuce, romaine lettuce, radicchio, watercress. Give 1 cup of greens per pound of body weight daily.
- Do not offer sugary treats like yogurt drops.
- Fruits and carrots should be given in very limited amounts just as treats (for example: the rabbit can have ½ a baby carrot or one strawberry a day).
- Vegetables and fruits not eaten within 6 hours should be discarded.
- Freshwater should always be available. Change it daily. You may use bottles or bowls - I always recommend having at least 2 in the cage.

Activity

- Cardboard boxes make great toys! You may fill it with hay to make it even more fun!
- Timothy hay-based toys.
- Natural wood blocks to chew on.

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Other information

- It is normal and important for rabbits to eat their cecotropes—soft, black feces that look like blackberries. They pass early in the morning or late at night; this practice of ingesting stool (coprophagy) often happens first thing in the morning, so you may not notice this behavior.
- Rabbits stay clean and rarely need baths.
- Their fur may be brushed with a soft brush; rabbits should be brushed a few times per week to decrease hair ingestion. Hair ingestion can cause gastrointestinal obstruction, which is life threatening.
- Rabbits need their nails clipped approximately once a month.

Veterinary care

- Yearly wellness exam is recommended for young animals. After 5 years old they should be seen every 6 months.
- Dental care may be needed as their teeth grow continuously through life
- They require RHDV2 vaccine yearly. The state of Florida requires that every animal vaccinated is also microchipped.