

Rabbits

Rabbits are active affectionate pets who enjoy being petted. Some rabbits follow their owner and lick your hand like a dog. Rabbits play by running around the room, and will amuse you with their leaping and twisting antics. Because they are so active, they need at least an hour a day out of their cage to play.

Rabbits come in 45 different breeds, from the tiny dwarf breeds, weighing only 2-3 pounds, to the giant breeds that can tilt the scales at 20 pounds! Some have lop ears, some have short plushy coats, and some have long angora coats.

Rabbits make great interactive pets for adults and older children.

Feeding

Rabbits are strict herbivores. Rabbit pellets make up their main diet, and they also need timothy hay for roughage and leafy greens such as dandelion leaves, bok choy, kale, cilantro, parsley and dark leaf lettuce every day. They can also have carrots, cucumber, apple, small amounts of oranges, peppers, and other veggies. Treats are great for training and strengthening the bond between you and your rabbit and can comprise 10% of their diet.

Housing

Rabbits need a cage at least 36" X 24" X 18" tall, and the bigger the better to provide room for them to move around. If the floor is made of wire, provide a solid surface such a board, plastic tray or rug for your rabbit to rest on. Rabbits can be litter box trained. For litter, choose from aspen shavings or those made of recycled paper or organic pellets. Do not use clay litter or cedar shavings. Rabbits kept in the house bond most closely to their owner. They can be kept outdoors, but must be kept below 95 degrees F in a hutch well protected from wind, weather, and in the shade.

Accessories

Rabbits need a very large water bottle, a non-tip food dish or hopper, a hayrack and a mineral salt wheel. They enjoy playing with small balls and toys they can pick up and toss. They also enjoy chewing on hard treats and chew toys.

Sanitation

Clean the litter box as needed, and wash the cage and accessories weekly. Urine deposits can be removed with vinegar. Be sure to scrub all parts of the water bottle and replace the bottle every six months.

Maintenance

All rabbits do best if brushed once a week while longhaired rabbits need to be brushed or combed often. They may also need their toenails trimmed regularly.

Health care

Pet rabbits should be spayed or neutered for optimum health and to prevent behavior problems. Veterinary Pet Insurance (www.petinsurance.com) now offers health insurance policies for rabbits.

Special needs

Rabbits do not like to be picked up and instead like to interact with their owner down on the floor. All rooms where your rabbit is allowed to play must be “rabbit-proofed” by protecting electrical cords and removing items that you don’t want chewed.

Life cycle

Rabbits live an average of 6 to 10 years but can live up to 12 years. The gestation period is 28-31 days and the average litter size is 4 to 6. The bunnies open their eyes at 7-10 days and can be weaned at 6 to 8 weeks.

Expert Help

If you have questions about your rabbit, do not hesitate to contact us. We will be happy to help you choose a rabbit care book for more complete information.

Supplies Checklist

Large cage

Bedding/litter

Litter box

Resting platform

Water bottle

Non-tip food dish or hopper

Toss toys

Chew toys

Rabbit food

Hay rack

Timothy hay

Treats

Mineral salt wheel

Hairball remedy

Nail clippers

Brush and/or comb

