BUNNY BASICS
Are You Ready For A Rabbit?
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Prepared by All About Rabbits Rescue, Inc.
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A rabbit is an 8 - 12 year commitment
requiring the same consideration
and veterinary care as a cat or dog.
Although enchanting and adorable,
a pet rabbit is a HUGE responsibility!
An adult should always be
the primary caretaker.

Rabbits have very fragile bodies
and should be picked up only
if necessary by adults or children
(at least 10 years old)
trained in proper handling.
Dropping or mishandling rabbits
causes serious or fatal injuries.
Rabbits should be treated
by rabbit-savvy vets.
A list of rabbit-savvy vets
websites and links is
provided on the back of this brochure.

Rabbits need attention
and space to exercise
daily. Rabbits can be litter-box trained!
Rabbits are intelligent,
social animals that
make great pets if properly cared for
by their human companions.
Websites, such as www.myhouserabbit.com
or rabbit.org can help you decide
if a rabbit is the right pet for you.

Are you willing to ...
1. Pay for yearly vet visits, possible dental care,
and emergency medical care?
2. Spay / neuter your rabbit, trim nails regularly?
3. Provide 3 hours minimum of out time for
exercise and human companionship daily?
4. Pay for hay, pellets and fresh greens (minimum
of $3.00 a day per rabbit)?
5. Provide a safe indoor space large enough
for exercise and comfort and an area away
from predators, such as cats or dogs?
6. Rabbit-proof your home (bunnies like to chew)?
7. Supervise all interaction between the rabbit
and young children and other pets?

Have you considered ...
Who will take care of the pet rabbit
for the duration of its natural life
or after the children are
no longer interested/when you go on vacation?
Who does everyone in the home approve of having the rabbit?
Does everyone have allergies?
Does the landlord allow rabbits?

RABBITS AS GIFTS: The recipient (child or adult)
may NOT be prepared to take on an 8 - 12 year
commitment.
If you still want a pet rabbit, please read on ...

Nature and Personality
Rabbits are shy prey animals with
different needs than cats and dogs.
They always need a place
of retreat such as a hidey-box, which can be purchased
at Petland Discounts. Children's loving desire to hold
or carry the rabbit is exactly what frightens
most rabbits. Being prey animals, most rabbits DO NOT
like to be picked up. Rabbits need to
learn to trust humans.
To gain your rabbit's trust, allow him to
come to you. Each rabbit has its own personality
and should be treated as an individual.
Some large rabbits are
outgoing, some are shy; the same holds true for smaller

or dwarf breeds. A mature rabbit's personality is known
while a baby's personality is not known. Smaller dwarf
rabbits need just as much space and exercise as
larger breed rabbits. Larger breeds may be less
active, less fragile and easier to handle.
Mature rabbits are easier to litter-box train.
Understand and appreciate your rabbit more by knowing his
language. (Go to Language.rabbitspeak.com.)

Diet
Hay must be available 24 / 7 in generous amounts
and is the single most important food.
Adult rabbits need unlimited timothy hay and
plain timothy hay-based pellets in quantities
according to their weight.
Rabbits 7 months and younger should be given
unlimited alfalfa pellets and alfalfa hay.
Starting at 2 - 3 months, leafy greens such as parsley, cilantro, lettuce (no iceberg)
can be introduced. Adult rabbits will benefit
from a variety of greens. Wash greens
just prior to serving to
ensure additional hydration.
Water bowl cleaned
and replenished daily.
Seeds are not part of a rabbit’s
healthy diet. Proper weight is very important
in order
for your rabbit to be able
to clean itself and avoid
obesity which leads to other health problems.
(See diet at rabbit.org)

Housing
Your rabbit's home should be a minimum 3-4 times
the length of your rabbit allowing your rabbit to stand up
and stretch out completely.
If your current cage is smaller, you can attest a pen to it for additional space.
The pen also allows your rabbit to feel more part of the family,
satisfying its social needs.
Pens are available,
either on line or at various pet shops.
Rabbits' delicate legs can get caught in the cage wire exit ramps.
Please affix a cover (towel) so your rabbit
can safely enter and exit a cage by itself.
Your cage
plus pen can also accommodate a litter box that
contains hay and is at least one and a half times
the length of your rabbit.
Your rabbit will enjoy
sitting in his litter box while leisurely grazing on
hay.

Handling
Pick up your rabbit only when necessary, holding your rabbit
with two hands firmly but gently so its legs cannot
kick and he can't jump out of your hands / arms. Place
one hand around the upper chest and use the other
to hold his two hind legs so the rabbit cannot
kick. Never hold a rabbit by the ears or scruff.

Grooming
Rabbits are self-groomers and DO NOT need baths or
shampooing. NEVER immerse your rabbit in water as it
is extremely stressful and puts the rabbit at risk of
respiratory problems. Rabbit skin is extremely delicate.
If you find your rabbit has a "poopy butt," it may be due to
improper diet (too many treats) or unclean living quarters.
Eliminate treats and / or change hay
in litter box daily.
If the conditions persist, contact your vet. It is important to brush your rabbit's hair
once a week, more during shedding times and to clip
nails regularly.

Safety - Proofing
To ensure your rabbit's safety, protect your rabbit from
accessing house plants, electrical wires and any lead-
painted moldings or walls in the home.
(See Rabbit Proofing at Rabbit.org.)

Spaying / Neutering
A rabbit purchased at pet shop is NOT spayed or
neutered.
Spaying/neutering reduces unwanted
behaviors such as spraying, mounting and aggression.
A fixed rabbit will also be better at using his litter box
(see litter box at rabbit.org).
Females can be spayed at 6 months,
males at 4 months. It is imperative to have
females spayed as they a 50-80% chance of
developing reproductive cancer. A rabbit adopted
through most rescue groups or NYC Animal Care and
Control location comes already spayed and neutered.
Two Rabbits Together
"NEVER" keep two unfixed rabbits together. A male
and female can produce litters every 30 days. Two
rabbits of the same sex are very territorial and will
fight, sometimes leading to fatal injuries. Ask your vet
or local rescue to help you sex your rabbits, but in the
meantime, keep rabbits separate.
Getting a Companion for your Rabbit

To get a bunny friend for your rabbit, please have your bunny spayed / neutered, then contact your local rabbit rescue. Similar to humans, not all rabbits like each other, and it's important to let your bunny pick its own partner. There is great joy and entertainment in seeing two rabbits groom and keep each other company. (See bonding at rabbit.org.)

Rabbit Examination

Regularly examine your rabbit by very gently checking for anything unusual. A bunny’s bottom should be clean. The bottom of the hind feet may be calloused, but should not be raw with broken skin / blood (sore hocks). The eyes should be clear (not tearing) and the ears free of spots (mites).

Fun Toys and Stimulation

Rabbits need a stimulating environment to prevent boredom and depression. Toys and hay provide entertainment for rabbits, and at the same time, keep their teeth trimmed. Untreated grass mats, cardboard boxes, toilet paper roll or paper bag stuffed with hay are good toys. Rabbits explore their world by chewing and providing different varieties of hay (Oat, brome) is stimulating for them.

Purchase Items

A pen and / or cage, a large amount of hay, plain pellets without seeds, toys, litter box, litter, a large quantity of hay, a hidey-box to retreat to, nail trimmers. Heavy crocks for water are easier to drink from and cannot be turned over. Ask your adoption counselor for more details on tunnel toy, non-toxic wood and other chew toys.

Medical Emergency

If a rabbit is not eating, moving or pooping, has diarrhea or holds his head tilted, it is an emergency. Do not wait! Take your rabbit to the vet IMMEDIATELY. GI stasis and head tilt are common rabbit ailments, but if treated right away, may be remedied. Special equipment for medical emergencies include baby gas drops (simethicone), pain medicine (Metacam), syringe, digital thermometer, heating pad or snuggle safe, styptic powder, Vaseline. We hope that stasis never happens, but it is best to be prepared. Ask your vet, local rabbit rescue, or an experienced rabbit handler to show you trimming, handling and temp taking. Sneezing and / or a wet nose indicate an upper respiratory problem (consult a vet). Online support via websites does not replace vet care, especially in an emergency.

Very Important Rabbit Tips

- Carrots and anything other than hay, pellets & greens are treats. Give once in a while and in very small pieces.
- Rabbits' bones are VERY fragile and comprise only 8-10% of their total body weight.
- Rabbits need non-skid flooring. Slippery floors compromise their joints and can cause spay legs.
- Rabbits should always be kept indoors to protect them from predators, fleas, ticks and fly strike.
- Safe room temp for a rabbit is no more than 75 degrees.
- A rabbit's normal temperature range is 101-103 degrees.
- Rabbits' teeth can grow 6 inches per year and hay helps to keep their teeth trim.
- Rabbits are social and need to be part of the family.
- Rabbits should not be left alone for more than 12 hours.
- Rabbits can be boarded at most of the vets listed here.
- Rabbits like to be stroked gently from the front of the nose to the head.
- In the wild, rabbits may travel up to 2 acres daily.
- Use only paper based litter products.
- The best toy for a rabbit is a rabbit partner (all parties must be spayed and neutered).
- Mold and dehydration can be fatal – fresh water daily!
- Never abandon your rabbit in a park or the street – it is against the law and the bunny will not survive!

Rabbit Websites

- Rabbit.org: general info, rabbit behavior
- http://www.medirabbit.com/: medical, health
- Myhouserabbit.org: general info
- Etherbun: medical, health, emergency help

Internet Links

Press control and click on the links below. You can also Google any of these topics.

- RABBIT MEDICAL HELP / CARE /DIET / GI STASIS
  http://www.rabbitcare.org/article-index.htm
- SPAY / NEUTER
  http://www.rabbit.org/faq/sections/spay-neuter.html
- LITTER TRAINING
  http://www.rabbit.org/faq/sections/litter.html
- RABBIT PROOFING YOUR HOME
  http://www.rabbit.org/faq/sections/rabbit-proofing.html
- GROOMING
- RABBIT.ORG SPANISH TRANSLATIONS
  http://www.rabbit.org/translations/spanish/index.html

Recommended Exotics Vets

Who Provide Full-Service Rabbit Care

Manhattan
Shachar Maika, DVM
Humane Society of New York “LOW COST”
306 East 59th St, NYC 10024
(212) 752-4842
Becky Campbell, DVM and Debora Levison, DVM
Symphony Veterinary Center
170 West 96th Street, NYC 10025
(212) 866-8000
Alex Wilson, DVM, Anthony Pliny, DVM
The Center for Avian and Exotic Medicine
568 Columbus Avenue, NYC 10024
(212) 501-8750
Catherine Quesenbury, DVM
Animal Medical Center NYC
510 E. 62nd Street, NYC 10021
(212) 838-8100 (212)229-8622
Westchester
Gil Stanzione, DVM
Dakota Veterinary Center
381 Dobbs Ferry Road
White Plains, NY 10607
(914) 421-0020
Laurie Hess, DVM
Veterinary Center for Birds and Exotics
709 Bedford Road
Bedford Hills, NY 10507
(914) 864-1414
Long Island
Jennifer Saver, DVM & Laura George, DVM
Castip and Carrots Veterinary Hospital
2056 Jericho Turnpike
New Hyde Park, NY 11040
(516) 877-7080
Heidi Hoefer, DVM
Island Exotic Vet Care
591 East Jericho Turnpike
Huntington, NY 11746
(631) 424-5300
Jeff Rose, DVM
Jefferson Animal Hospital
606 Patchogue Rd.
Pt. Jefferson Station, NY 11776
(631) 473-0415
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For RABBIT VETS in NJ, CT and other areas, please go to http://www.rabbit.org/vets/index.html
This brochure was prepared by All About Rabbits Rescue, Inc.
(AllAboutRabbitsRescue@gmail.com-347-993-2300).
And it’s all about the rabbits!!!