

Bunny Basics

So you've gotten a bunny . . . what now? Here are the basics on how to care for the new member of your family.

Most health problems seen in bunnies stem from poor husbandry so let's start out right so nothing goes wrong.

DIET

- Grass or Timothy Hay should make up about 80% of your bunny's diet. Do not use alfalfa hay once bunny is full grown. It can cause bladder stones.
- Vegetables should make up about 10% of the diet (see attached list).
- Pellets (plain pellets with no added seeds or cereal) should be the final 10%.

HOUSING

- Always go with the largest cage you can manage. Bunnies are very energetic and need as much space as possible, even if they have playtime outside of the cage every day.
- A solid floored area is a must to avoid sore hocks.
- Solid walled cages should be avoided due to lack of ventilation.
- Always have some sort of hide for the bunny to "burrow."
- Most bunnies can be litter trained but use caution when choosing litter.
 - Never use pine or cedar shaving as the oils can cause liver damage.
 - Clay cat litter is not recommended, both because it can "clump" in the bunny's GI tract and the dust causes respiratory problems.

VETERINARY CARE

- Routine
 - Yearly Wellness Exam/New Bunny Exam
 - Spaying/Neutering at 3-6 months (to prevent uterine cancer and spraying).
- Medical Concerns
 - Malocclusion (overgrown teeth – see attached).
 - Loose Stools (diarrhea)
 - Anorexia (Rabbits cannot go without eating! This is an Emergency!)
 - Upper Respiratory Infections (sniffles or snuffles)
 - Mites (ear mites or hair mites)
 - Lethargy/Hiding

Remember, rabbits are a prey species so they will hide all illness as long as they can; by the time you see symptoms, the bunny is usually much sicker than it's showing. This is why any change in behavior, eating, drinking, defecation or urination should be taken very seriously!

If you have any further questions, feel free to contact us at 317-736-8880, visit HillviewVets.com or email exotics@hillviewvets.com. The House Rabbit Society (www.rabbit.org) is another great resource.