



The Bunny Burrow Rabbit Rescue Care Guide

Introduction

The Bunny Burrow Rabbit Rescue is a DFW area not-for-profit organization dedicated to working with rescued house rabbits and finding them new adoptive homes. The Bunny Burrow also focuses on educating the public about house rabbits and their care. We can provide vet referrals, but we are not able to give medical advice. We facilitate rabbit adoptions, matching people and rabbits together, working with families to ensure a successful and happy home for all. Our adoption fees are \$85 for a single and \$140 for a pair of bunnies. This includes spaying/neutering, which actually costs between \$100 and \$300 for a single rabbit at a vet's office. Rabbits for sale at pet and feed stores are not neutered or spayed, which is the primary reason they are abandoned. Once you get a rabbit "fixed" many of the bad behaviors caused by raging hormones disappear.

We do not support rabbit breeding practices as there are too many homeless rabbits already. All rabbits that we find homes for are spayed and neutered upon being adopted. We encourage people to house their rabbits indoors, as Texas is prone to summers of unbearable heat and humidity. There are bugs and diseases in the dirt and rabbits have too many predators to live safely outdoors.

The Bunny Burrow is always in need of new foster homes to help with our efforts in saving bunnies lives. If you have been considering a rabbit, but not sure if you are ready to commit to 10 + years, then contact us at thebunnyburrowrr@gmail.com for a foster application. It's extremely rewarding to see a pet placed in a loving home when all the odds were against it.



Send us E-mail: thebunnyburrowrr@gmail.com
Bunny HopLine: 817-308-8139 or 817-676-2530
World Wide Web: <http://www.thebunnyburrow.org>



A Practical Guide to Indoor Companion Rabbits

Living with a House Rabbit: Bunny Basics

Many people are discovering the joys of sharing their homes with one or more companion rabbits. Rabbits are intelligent and playful, can be easily litter-trained, and make wonderful house pets. When you understand rabbit behavior, proper veterinary care, how to create the proper environment for your pet, and how to bunny-proof your home, your pet rabbit will provide years of love and companionship for you and your family.

Quick Facts About Rabbits.

Rabbits are not good starter pets for children

Rabbits are delicate, ground-loving creatures. Most rabbits do not like to be held or handled, and may try to escape a well-meaning child's arms by biting and scratching. In addition, a rabbit's back may be easily broken as a result of improper handling.

Rabbits are interesting and have lively personalities.

Simply placing a rabbit in a cage with minimal interaction from you and your family does result in a boring (and bored) pet. However, with regular interaction from you and plenty of indoor running space for a bunny to kick up his heels and play, a rabbit suddenly becomes a social, fun-loving addition to a household. All the rabbit needs is the opportunity to show his true colors to you.

Myth: Rabbits are low maintenance pets and don't live very long.

Rabbits have needs similar to those of other household pets. A sick bunny needs medical care from a qualified veterinarian. Rabbits have specific dietary needs. A chronically ill rabbit will require long-term care. In addition, for medical and behavioral reasons rabbits need to be spayed and neutered. Cages and litter boxes need frequent cleaning. A properly cared for rabbit can live 8 to 10 years, sometimes even longer. This is quite a long-term commitment for a rabbit owner.

A bunny owner needs patience, creativity to block or hide things a rabbit might want to chew (such as electrical cords), and a willingness to get down on the floor to interact with a bunny on her own level. For people willing to make this commitment to a house rabbit, the reward is years of companionship with a surprisingly clever, loving, and intelligent creature.



Food for Thought: Hay! It's What's For Dinner

The number one most important thing to feed your rabbit is grass hay. Unlimited amounts of timothy or orchard hay should be supplied 24 hours a day. Legume hays such as alfalfa and clover hay contain large amounts of calcium and protein which can cause health problems when fed in excess to rabbits over 6 months of age. These hays should only be used as treats. Feeding grass hay provides large quantities of fiber without unneeded calories, and helps to prevent intestinal problems such as G.I. stasis(slow down of the intestinal system).

Pellets should be offered in limited amounts to rabbits over 6 months. Pellets should be of high quality with high fiber (18 %), low fat (1 - 2 %), low calcium, and low protein. **Do not feed pellets with nuts, seeds, dried vegetables or other "treats" in them!** These pellets are low in quality and very high in fat. Plain, high quality pellets are the best thing for your rabbit. Rabbits can live on a hay and veggie only diet as long as you feed them a large amount and variety of veggies.

Vegetables should also make up a large amount of your rabbit's diet. Try to introduce at least eight different types of vegetables, and of these, at least three should be fed daily. Leafy greens such as romaine, green/red leaf lettuce, dandelion greens, endive, parsley, cilantro, basil, peppermint leaves, carrot tops, beet tops, radish tops, collard greens, and escarole are good, as well as vegetables such as celery, and broccoli. Kale and spinach can be fed in limited amounts. Generally, one heaping cup of vegetables per two pounds of body weight can be fed per day. Be sure to wash all vegetables thoroughly.



Treats such as carrot, apple, pear, raisins, melon, papaya, or banana can also be fed (about a tablespoon a day). Grains such as rolled oats or barley can also be fed in small amounts.

Fresh water should always be available to your rabbit. This can be provided in a tip-proof ceramic dish.

ADULT Bunny Dietary Guidelines

UNLIMITED HAY EVERY DAY!! Purchase good quality hay and pellets online. We have ordered from www.sierravalleyhay.com, www.americanpetdiner.com/, www.smallpetsselect.com

Timothy is the best –	entices all but the pickiest bunny
Orchard Grass is also good –	nice change from Timothy
Alfalfa –	great for young bunnies, but too rich for regular use in adults
(use as a treat)	
Oat Hay –	another great treat hay!
Coastal is the local variety –	Not nutritious enough
for bunnies – can be used as litter box filler	

HIGH QUALITY TIMOTHY PELLETS

There are many varieties available at feed stores and pet supply stores – look for TIMOTHY only pellets, high fiber and low protein.

Do not buy the kind with the added seeds & colored bits – it is junk food for bunnies!



2-4 lbs.	1/8 cup daily
5-7 lbs.	1/4 cup daily
8-19 lbs	1/2 cup daily
11-15 lbs	3/4 cup daily

Young Rabbits: Rabbits up to six months of age can have free access to pellets. Feed alfalfa pellets then slowly transition to timothy pellets at six months. After this growing stage, pellets should be limited based on the weight of the rabbit.

SAFE VEGGIES

- Maintain a variety in the diet, at least 3 types a day to ensure adequate vitamins in the diet. 5 or more types a day is even better.
- Feed at least one heaping cup of raw veggies per 2 pounds of bunny – some bunnies eat a lot more.
- There is a safe veggie list at the end of this packet. All of the veggies are safe, but each bunny has different tastes! Limit the ones highest in calcium.
- Most herbs are considered quite tasty by many bunnies, too.



FRUITS & TREATS

A small amount of fruit can be fed daily: carrot, banana, apple, pear, orange, mango, plum, peach, berries, grapes, etc. BEWARE: apple & pear seeds, fruit pits, banana peel, & orange rind can be deadly or dangerous! Don't risk it! Don't encourage your bunny to be a junk food junkie with human cereals, chocolate, or seed treats. Frozen fruits are especially yummy in the summer-time: try freezing fresh papaya chunks or grapes.

Home Sweet Home: Environments

Most rabbits have some sort of enclosure they can call their own. Even rabbits that have 24 hour free range of a house enjoy a place to go to nap, hide, or nibble hay. The rabbit's enclosure should be a pleasant place to spend time, and the bigger, the better. We recommend that you either purchase an exercise pen, build a condo (see below) or bunny-proof one room of your house (ideally a family or rec room where the bunny can act as part of the family). You can purchase exercise pens at most pet stores, Tractor Supply or online on Amazon. The panels to make a condo are available at Target in the home organization section. They are called "Organize It" cubes. Throw away the connectors and connect the grids at each corner with zip/electrical ties.

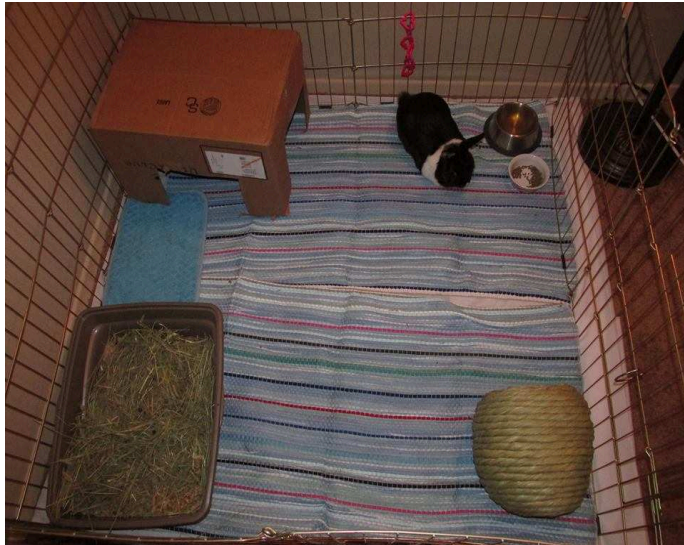


The X-pen/Condo

Most cages for rabbits sold in pet stores are much too small for a rabbit. They are also much more expensive than an x-pen or condo you can build yourself. Many people have designed multilevel rabbit "condos" with ramps, enclosed hiding places, and multitudes of other features designed to keep a bunny occupied. A general rule of thumb in selecting a cage is to choose one that is at least four times the stretched out size of the adult rabbit. Try to provide at least four square feet for a small breed and nine square feet for a large breed. Multiple rabbits living together need even more space.

Cages often come with wire mesh bottoms and a removable tray to catch urine and feces. While this is convenient in terms of cleaning, it can be very hard on a rabbit's feet. Constant exposure to this type of surface can lead to sore hocks, a condition in which the hair on the feet is worn away and ulcers form on the ankle.

Another thing to consider if you choose an x-pen is flooring. We recommend purchasing a sheet of linoleum available at most home improvement stores to protect any flooring/carpet.



A rabbit must have access to water and **hay** while in her enclosure. Water can be provided in a heavy, tip-proof ceramic bowl. Place the rabbits hay in one end of the litter box or in a hayrack attached to the enclosure. A variety of toys should be in the enclosure to keep your rabbit occupied.

Enclosures should always be kept clean.

White vinegar is an excellent cleaner for litter boxes. Soiled litter should be changed at least once a week. We suggest equine pine pellets for litter as it is the most economical and safe for rabbits.

Above all, the enclosure should be an inviting place for your bunny. The rabbit should view her enclosure as a safe home base that is all her own, and not as an unpleasant punishment. A rabbit can also be fairly territorial, and may defend her area if she feels threatened. Her space should be respected, and only entered for cleaning and feeding.

Toys for Bunnies

Rabbits love to play, and they need mental stimulation to keep active and healthy. Bunnies like to chew, dig, push, jump and throw. Giving them toys of their own also keeps your furniture from taking a beating from bunny teeth and nails. Store-bought toys are good, but many common household objects can provide just as much excitement:

- ⇒ Toilet paper and paper towel tubes
- ⇒ Hard plastic baby toys
- ⇒ Jingly wire cat ball to toss around
- ⇒ Old phone book for shredding (in a cardboard box)
- ⇒ Canning jar lids
- ⇒ A ramp to climb and a shelf to sit on
- ⇒ Empty rolled oats container
- ⇒ A non-chewable plastic ball to nudge
- ⇒ Boxes of all sizes (with staples removed)
- ⇒ Grass mats for chewing
- ⇒ Big tub of hay or straw to dig in
- ⇒ Cardboard take-out trays from fast-food restaurants
- ⇒ Untreated willow baskets and balls to chew (available at NTRS and www.busbunny.com)
- ⇒ Cardboard tunnel-usually used as a form for pouring concrete posts (see photo)
- ⇒ Toys - Online Resources
 - www.Busbunny.com
 - www.BunnyLuv.com
 - www.RabbitStop.com
 - www.leithpetwerks.com



“HE’S CHEWING *EVERYTHING!!!*”

Rabbit Proofing Your Home



Rabbits have been referred to as “life-support systems for teeth that chew.” They have an amazing ability to chew, rip, shred, tear, and otherwise destroy anything they come across. A rabbit’s teeth grow continuously and chewing helps to wear down teeth to a healthy level. By providing acceptable chewing alternatives and making some adjustments to the area the bunny occupies, you can minimize the destruction to your home and property.

While some rabbits are allowed run of an entire house, others have their areas restricted to certain rooms. For example, a computer with all its cords and cables is difficult to rabbit-proof, and it is often easier to simply restrict access to that room. A strong baby gate that is too tall for a bunny to jump is a good investment.

The number one household hazard to rabbits is electrical and telephone cords. Cords seem to draw rabbits like a magnet and sharp bunny teeth can sever a cord in seconds. Not

only can the resulting electrical shock injure or kill your rabbit, the bare wire can be a risky fire hazard. Cords can be hidden behind bookcases and other furniture that the rabbit can not get behind. Another solution is to encase the wire in something that the bunny can not bite through. Plastic cable covers can be purchased at electronics, automotive or home improvement stores. You can also purchase plastic tubing or a garden hose, slit it lengthwise and insert the wire inside.

If you like the buttons on your remote control keep it out of reach of your house rabbit! Rabbits love anything rubbery and can chew up a remote in minutes. Carpet is also irresistible temptation to many rabbits. A bunny may dig or chew at carpet fibers, which can lead to an intestinal blockage if ingested. If there are only a few spots (usually corners) where she likes to dig, grass mats or ceramic tiles can be used to hide the area. Plastic carpet runners protect the carpet from digging and urine. A large tub of hay or straw also serves as a good digging outlet. A wide variety of untreated willow baskets, wood blocks, and chewable cardboard gives a bunny plenty of opportunity to chew.

Rabbits who chew the household despite these alternatives may need to be further deterred. A squirt bottle is a cheap, safe way to let your rabbit know what she is doing is wrong. Also, bitter tasting substances can be bought in pet supply stores and applied to carpet, table legs, curtains, or whatever she likes to chew. When she begins to make the association that chewing the furniture results in something unpleasant, she will be less likely to destroy your property and seek out acceptable chewing and digging pastimes.

Another hazard is household plants. Many of these are toxic to rabbits and can cause serious illness or death when eaten. Plants should be out of reach.

Other cover-ups, diversions, and measures can be taken as needed to make your home rabbit-friendly. Expensive hard-cover books can be moved to a higher bookshelf, shoes and clothes should be put away, and important bills and documents should not be left on the floor, or you can be assured your bunny will find these things and work her destructive magic on them.

Compiled by NTRS, Inc. and The Bunny Burrow Rabbit Rescue, Inc.

Spaying and Neutering

Just like cats and dogs, rabbits must be spayed and neutered. Due to over-breeding and the common misconception that rabbits are easy or “disposable” pets, there are more rabbits than there are good homes willing to take them. Rabbits are the third most common animal to be abandoned to animal shelters. Animal shelters that accept rabbits and House Rabbit Society foster homes are nearly always filled to capacity. Many other rabbits are “set free” in fields and parks where they die.

Aside from helping to relieve the massive overpopulation problem, spaying and neutering your rabbit has behavioral and medical benefits. When a rabbit hits puberty between 3 and 6 months of age, he most likely will become very territorial. Both male and female rabbits may aggressively defend their territory by grunting, lunging, and biting. Sexual activity in the form of mounting hands, feet, fuzzy bedroom slippers, and anything else available is also very common. While these behaviors are troublesome, one common behavior tops them all: spraying. Unneutered males and some unspayed females will spray large amounts of urine to mark territory and objects (such as an unsuspecting owner) as belonging to them.

Neutering relieves most of these behavioral difficulties without changing your rabbit's personality.



Most importantly, for medical reasons **female rabbits must always be spayed**. Studies have found that 50 to 80% of unspayed female rabbits develop uterine and/or mammary tumors by five years of age. Spaying your female rabbit adds years to her life.

Spaying and neutering, as with any other medical procedure, should be done only by a veterinarian with experience and training in treatment of rabbits. Male rabbits can be neutered as soon as their testicles descend (3 to 6 months). Most vets spay females at about 6 months.

The Bunny Burrow ONLY recommends the vets listed at the end of this document. We also recommend only the vet listed, not all the vets at a given clinic. If there is not a recommended vet in your area here are some questions to ask your local vet before you schedule the surgery.

Questions to Ask Your Vet Before Spay/Neuter Surgery

⇒ How many spays/neuters has the vet done?

Your vet should be seeing rabbits on a regular basis and be experienced in surgery. ⇒ What is the success rate?

90% is too low. Some deaths are bound to occur, but they should be very rare. ⇒ Should the rabbit be fasted prior to surgery?

The answer should always be no. Rabbits cannot vomit, so this is not a problem during surgery.

⇒ What anesthesia will be used?

Isoflurane is the most common anesthesia used in rabbits, but halothane can be used also. It depends on the vet's training and experience.

⇒ In a spay, will both the ovaries and the uterus be removed?

The answer should always be “Yes.”

⇒ Will the rabbit need to stay overnight after the surgery?

If so, provide the vet with pellets, hay and veggies to feed. Many people also give the bunny an old t-shirt or washcloth that smells like home for security.

⇒ Always ask for specific instructions on what to do once your bunny comes home. Call your vet immediately if the rabbit begins chewing on stitches, stops eating or drinking, or has any other difficulty.

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YES-They Can Be Litter Trained!



Many people are surprised to find that rabbits can be litter-trained. Some rabbits “get it” immediately. Others take patience, time, and a lot of litter-boxes (at first). Either way the result is a companion that can be trusted in the main living areas of your home.

Spaying or neutering your rabbit is a must for litter training. Unaltered rabbits are highly territorial and will frequently spray large amounts of urine to mark their territory, especially during adolescence. Spaying and neutering decreases this urge to spray and improves litter habits greatly.

Rabbits vary in how quickly they learn to use a litterbox. Young rabbits are often hyper and too busy exploring to remember to return to a litter box, and can be more difficult to train. A rabbit with a well established spraying habit may continue to spray, especially in the presence of another rabbit. Use white vinegar for old and new pee spots. Soak the spot in white vinegar and dab it up. White vinegar removes the stain and the smell so that the rabbit won't continually pick the same spot.

The Setup and Training

You will most likely have to start with several litter boxes. Fill them with compressed pine pellets or paper-based litter. Pine and cedar shavings can cause respiratory and liver damage and should not be used. Clay cat litter and corn cob litter can cause intestinal blockages if ingested and are not recommended either. Clumping cat litter is especially dangerous if ingested as it can cause a cement-like blockage and should **never** be used.

Litter-training begins in the rabbits enclosure. Rabbits tend to urinate in one spot, so place a litter box in the corner of the enclosure that the rabbit has chosen to use as a bathroom. Place a few droppings and some urine soaked litter in the litter box to encourage him to continue to use that place. Place fresh timothy or orchard hay in or above the litter box every day.

When he is reliably urinating in the litter box, allow a little freedom in a small area such as a bathroom. As he becomes successful in a small area, you can increase his territory. If he makes a mistake and misses a litter box, use white vinegar to clean the area. If he consistently urinates in one spot, place a litter box there. He will eventually narrow his bathroom areas to one or two favorite litter boxes and the extra ones can be removed.

Control of droppings usually follows urine training. When entering a new territory, even neutered rabbits will mark it with droppings. As they become more familiar with their surroundings, this marking decreases and usually becomes controlled on its own. Litter boxes should be cleaned once or twice weekly or more frequently if more than one rabbit is using them. Soiled recycled newspaper litter can be composted or used to fertilize a garden, or simply thrown away. Clean the litter box with white vinegar. This will dissolve any calcium buildup on the plastic and gets rid of any odor. Never use Lysol or pine cleaners, as the phenols in these cleaners can cause liver and respiratory damage.



Paper-Based and Other Safe Litters

Some common paper-based litters are: Yesterday's News, Nature Fresh, PaPurr, Cat Country, CareFresh, EcoFresh and Bio-Flush. Feline Pine and Equine Pine Pellets are wood based litters that have had the aromatic oils removed that otherwise would cause respiratory problems. If these are unavailable, you can use plain newspaper, crosscut shredded paper (no staples) and/or hay (this will need more frequent cleaning). ****We use Equine Pelletized Bedding sold at Tractor Supply or most feed stores.****

Grooming and Handling: You Look Mah-valous!

Up From Ground Zero

Rabbits need to be handled very carefully. Most rabbits generally do not like to be lifted from the ground and may struggle. They also have an exceptionally delicate skeletal structure and can be injured very easily if improperly handled or dropped.

A rabbit should never be picked up by her ears: she is not designed to support the weight of her body and picking her up like this hurts terribly and can cause damage. In addition, rabbits should not be lifted by the scruff of the neck. If the rear legs are not supported, she will struggle, kick out and most likely hurt her back.



The best way to pick up a rabbit is to slide one hand underneath her chest, place the other hand firmly on the rump and scoop toward your body. Hold the rabbit close to you in a firm grasp. Some rabbits may struggle even when they're secure against a body. If your bunny does this, it sometimes helps to cover her eyes with your hand. Be prepared to squat quickly should she struggle violently or start to escape from your arms.

To put your rabbit back down on the floor, do a deep knee bend to get yourself as low as possible without tipping or tilting the bunny. Gently release her to the floor.

Good Bunny Hygiene

Like cats, most rabbits do a pretty good job of keeping themselves looking their best. However, there are still some things that you will need to look after to keep your bunny well-groomed and healthy.

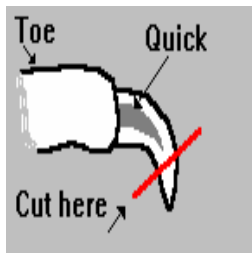
Long-haired rabbits such as angoras, fuzzy lops, and Jersey woolies need vigilant, daily brushing to keep mats and tangles from forming.



Once these mats form, the only way to remove them is to *gently* cut them out. It can literally take hours to get mats out once they form and regular brushing prevents this. A wire slicker brush commonly sold for cats easily removes large amounts of loose hair and wool. A wide-toothed pet comb can get out the occasional minor snarl.

Short-haired rabbits will need to be brushed as well, but not as frequently. Rabbits shed four times a year, with two of these shedding periods being major molts.

Rabbits' toenails need periodic clipping to keep from growing too long and causing foot problems such as sore hocks. This can be done by your vet, or you can do it yourself with a little practice. To do it yourself, try wrapping the bunny in a towel "bunny burrito" and stick one paw out at a time. We would be more than happy to show you how to cut their nails!



If your rabbit has light-colored toenails, you will be able to see a vein inside. This is the quick. (If your rabbit has dark nails, you will need to backlight the nails with a flashlight to see this.) Using cat nail clippers or regular human toenail clippers, clip the toenail just above the quick (see illustration). If by mistake you cut through the quick it will bleed, often quite heavily. This can be stopped with styptic powder, corn starch, or regular flour. Keep an eye on that toe for a few days to be sure it does not become infected.

Male and female rabbits have scent glands on either side of their genitals. These two small pockets will sometimes require cleaning (some bunnies keep them cleaner than others) every month. Be very gentle when cleaning them out as the skin is very sensitive there. We suggest a q-tip dipped in mineral oil and gently clean out the waxy debris

“Hey, What’s One More?”

Multiple Rabbit Households

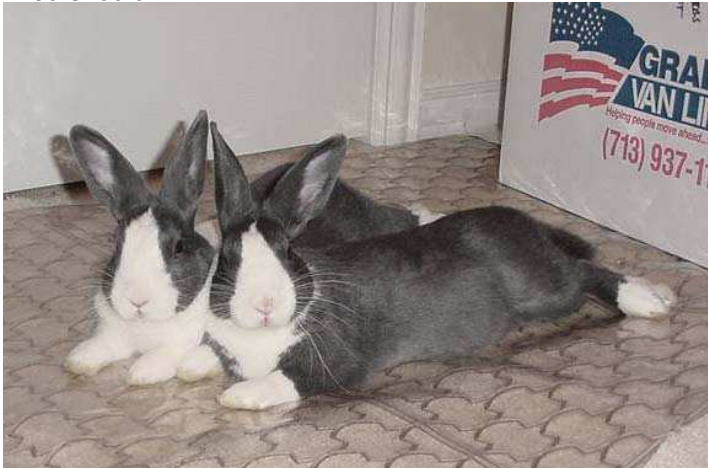
Rabbits are extremely social animals. Wild European rabbits from which domestic rabbits descended live in large groups. While these rabbits breed quickly and can often overrun an area, spayed and neutered domestic rabbits can enjoy each other’s company without worrying about a population explosion.

Bonded rabbits are lifelong friends. They often share an enclosure, groom each other, and sleep nestled up together. Often, when one rabbit is ill the pair is left together since the separation of the two can be stressful. When one of the pair dies, the other mourns the loss and may not eat or behave normally for some time. It can often help to get your rabbit a new buddy after such a loss to re-establish a sense of companionship.

Introducing rabbits can be tricky business, but the final reward of watching a bonded pair snuggle closely or bound about a room is well worth the trouble. The easiest couple to introduce is a neutered male and a spayed female, especially if you bring a new female to an established male. Female rabbits are more territorial and may resent any new rabbit, male or female. Two spayed female rabbits can also be bonded, though it may be more difficult. Most difficult, but certainly not impossible, is introducing two neutered males. All important are the bunnies’ personalities: a very mellow neutered male may accept just about any new friend.



When bringing a new rabbit into a house, it helps if your rabbit chooses their new friend. You can schedule an appointment at The Bunny Burrow or other shelters to introduce your rabbits to available rabbits of the opposite gender. Both rabbits **MUST** be fixed before the bonding process can be begin. If you bring home a rabbit from a city shelter or pet store, be sure to quarantine her in a separate room and schedule health exam with a vet right away. Once you are sure the new rabbit is healthy (and spayed or neutered), introduce the rabbits in an area that is new to them both. The new situation in an unfamiliar area makes most rabbits slightly nervous, and they may band together to explore the new surroundings. You should



also move their enclosures together so they get accustomed to each other’s smell and movements. If all goes well with the introductions for several days, you can try to expand their run time to the regular place where they will live. Keep a spray bottle handy to break up any fights that may occur. If there is any fighting, go back to the neutral space for a few more days. Eventually, they should become friends. Some rabbits will fight, even in neutral territory. In these cases, always keep a spray bottle close at hand to break up any fights. A more stressful situation, such as a car ride is often needed to get these rabbits to accept each other. In all cases, be

prepared to move slowly. It takes time to build a lasting relationship.

If it becomes apparent that the rabbits will not tolerate each other, you may have to keep them separate. This possibility should *always* be considered when bringing a new rabbit into your household, and accommodations will have to be made for separate territories in your home. Rabbits can also form friendships with other animals such as guinea pigs, cats, and some dogs. While in many situations it is the rabbit who harasses the cat, young adolescent cats may not always be trustworthy enough to be left unsupervised with a rabbit. Dogs should be very calm and well-trained. Tips on bonding are available at www.rabbit.org and Th Bunny Burrow.

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Medical Concerns for Pet Rabbits

As soon as you notice that your rabbit is not eating, urinating, defecating, or behaving normally, consult a veterinarian experienced in rabbit care. See the list of recommend vets at the end of this document. Rabbits hide their illness until they are very ill and they can deteriorate very rapidly without proper veterinary care. It is IMPERATIVE that you seek medical attention as soon as your rabbit stops eating, pooping or responding to you.

There are many diseases common to rabbits, all of which need to be diagnosed and treated by a veterinarian. **The purpose of this section is not to help diagnose illnesses on your own, but to illustrate signs and symptoms that indicate your bunny may be ill.**

Some rabbits, especially Netherland Dwarfs or other rabbits bred for round shaped heads, often have maloccluded teeth. This is a condition in which the rabbit's teeth do not line up properly and overgrow into "tusks." This can happen either with the front teeth or the rear molars. These teeth will need to be clipped or filed periodically, or may need to be extracted altogether in some cases.

Sore Hocks is a condition in which the fur on the bottom of the rabbit's feet is worn away. The exposed skin is subject to cracking, ulcerations, and infection. Rabbits with sore hocks need a soft, dry resting place at all times, and extra care should be taken to clean their litterboxes more frequently to help keep their feet dry.

Fleas, flies, mites and other pests may infest your bunny. If you note any small specks, dry flaky skin, or crusty material in your rabbit's ears, contact your veterinarian.

Respiratory diseases are very common in rabbits. If you notice runny nose or eyes, labored breathing, mucous on the insides of the front paws (from the rabbit wiping his nose), or excessive sneezing or coughing, take your rabbit to a veterinarian immediately.

Symptoms of Illnesses

Other physical symptoms and signs to watch for are:

- inactivity- bunny is hunched up and not sociable
- lack of interest in food or water
- lack of urine or feces in the litterbox
- tilted head, loss of balance or coordination
- loss of consciousness or convulsions
- loss of movement in hind legs or any apparent broken bone, serious cut, or injury
- runny nose or eyes (can indicate serious respiratory problems)
- excessive gurgling digestive sounds
- diarrhea (liquid stool or normal stool surrounded with mucous) If you see soft droppings shaped like bunches of grapes, do not panic. These are normal in small amounts.
- bulging eyes coupled with loud grinding of the teeth indicate severe pain
- bloated or distended abdomen
- any sores, abscesses, lumps, or tumors
- drooling (may be caused by maloccluded molars)

Of course, keeping an eye open for symptoms and catching any problems in their early stages decreases the chance of a minor problem turning into a major catastrophe. Preventive measures such as feeding unlimited hay, regular grooming, proper diet, and exercise help your rabbit live a long and healthy life.

Finding a Veterinarian

The NTRS website, www.ntrs.org/vet.htm, maintains a list of recommended rabbit vets separated by regions. The best way to deal with an emergency is to be prepared. Find an experienced rabbit vet before an emergency arises. This will save precious time in a crisis.

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Adopting a Rabbit

If you are interested in adopting a rabbit, contact The Bunny Burrow. Please do not purchase a rabbit from a pet store or breeder while there are so many rabbits waiting in crowded shelters and foster homes.

The Bunny Burrow can assist you in locating a rabbit that needs a second chance. As a private rescue organization, we constantly run at capacity and have numerous rabbits in need of homes.

Please contact us for house rabbit information, resources and adoption assistance in the greater DFW area. Email us at thebunnyburrowrr@gmail.com or visit us through the World Wide Web at <http://www.thebunnyburrow.org>

We can give rescued bunnies love, exercise and fresh food,
But we need YOU to give them a home!!



Finding a Home for a Rabbit

If you have found a stray rabbit or have to give yours up, there are several things you can do:

- Contact The Bunny Burrow for information on finding a new home for your rabbit.
- Place ad at vets office
- Litter-train the rabbit.
- Interact with her so she is used to people.
- If possible, have the rabbit spayed or neutered. The Bunny Burrow can give you advice on where to go.
- **Never** offer your rabbit for free. Insist on a modest \$25 charge. This will prevent your rabbit from becoming snake food.
- Insist that your rabbit go to an indoor home only.
- Recommend that prospective adopters visit www.rabbit.org and/or purchase the *House Rabbit*

Handbook (Drollery Press, 2005), available from Barnes and Noble or from the House Rabbit Society,

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Rabbit Resources

The original version of this guide was originally compiled by Jennifer Royce of the Southern Tier Rabbit Care Network in 1996. It has since been revised and updated by NTRS and The Bunny Burrow. We would like to thank and acknowledge Jennifer Royce for the earlier version of this work.

Great Books... In order of our preference.

House Rabbit Handbook by Marinell Harriman. 2005
A House Rabbit Primer by Lucile Moore. 2005, Santa Monica Press.
Rabbit Health in the 21st Century by Kathryn R. Smith.
The Rabbit Handbook by K. Gendron
Rabbits for Dummies by Audrey Pavia.
Why Does My Rabbit...? by Anne McBride.



Websites worth bookmarking...

www.thebunnyburrow.org

The Language of Lagamorphs http://www.muridae.com/rabbits/rabbittalk_intro.html by Eric Mercer.

The **House Rabbit Society** www.rabbit.org The HRS has chapters around the country



Recommended Rabbit Veterinarians

We only recommend the vets named below. We don't have knowledge of other vets who may work in the same clinic. We **DO NOT** recommend that you use a vet not listed below

EMERGENCY CLINICS

For evening and weekend medical treatment of rabbits:

Emergency room vets often do not know how to treat rabbits. Please call ahead and make sure the recommended vets are working that night. Otherwise use Southlake and confirm a rabbit vet is on duty.

Animal Emergency Hospital of North Texas in Southlake	Metro 817-410-2273
North Texas Emergency Clinic Dr. Stacy Fowler	1712 W. Frankford Rd. Ste, #108, Carrollton 972-323-1310
Emergency Animal Clinic Dr. Susan Triplett	12101 Greenville Ave (and Markville) 972-994-9110

VET LIST

Country Club Pet Hospital Dr. Amana Neece	2250 Matlock Rd. Mansfield 817-477-4143
City Vet Dr. Effie Giannapolous NTRS official spay/neuter vet	2727 Oak Lawn Ave. Dallas 214-219-2838
Summerfields Animal Hospital Dr. Karen Metzler	4536 N Tarrant Pkwy, Fort Worth, TX 76244 (817) 485-8511
Boat Club Rd Animal Hospital Dr. Louisa Martin	9635 Boat Club Rd. Fort Worth 817-236-2000
Corinth Vet Clinic Dr. Carol Eddy	4451 Swisher Rd. Corinth 940-497-5383
Garden Ridge Animal Hospital Dr. Pam Hendricks	349 N. Garden Ridge Blvd Lewisville 972-436-2199
Carrollton West Pet Hospital Dr. Anna Osofsky	3729 Old Denton Rd - Carrollton 972-492-1828
South Flower Mound Animal Hospital Dr. Marc Cattoor	1900 Long Prairie Rd. Ste 100 - Flower Mound 972-724-7297
Main Street Veterinary Hospital Dr. Susan Brashear	4100 Kirkpatrick Ln - Flower Mound 972-355-0008
Stonebriar Veterinary Clinic Dr, Sylvia Gutierrez	5720 Town & Country Blvd Frisco 972-712-8387

Suggested Vegetables

San Diego HRS

Select at least three kinds of vegetables daily. A variety is necessary in order to obtain the necessary nutrients, with one each day that contains Vitamin A, indicated by an *. Add one vegetable to the diet at a time. Eliminate if it causes soft stools or diarrhea.

Alfalfa, radish & clover sprouts
Basil
Beet greens (tops)*
Bok choy
Broccoli (mostly leaves/stems)*
Brussels sprouts
Carrot & carrot tops*
Celery
Cilantro
Clover
Collard greens*
Dandelion greens and flowers (no pesticides)*
Endive*
Escarole
Green peppers
Kale (!)*
Mint
Mustard greens*
Parsley*
Pea pods (the flat edible kind)*
Peppermint leaves
Raddichio
Radish tops
Raspberry leaves
Romaine lettuce (no iceberg or light colored leaf)*
Spinach (!)*
Watercress*
Wheat grass

(!)=Use sparingly. High in either oxalates or goitrogens and may be toxic in accumulated quantities over a period of time

[House Rabbit Society](http://www.rabbit.org), www.rabbit.org is a non-profit rescue and education group. If you've found our information useful, please show your support by making a donation. Email reprint@rabbit.org for reprint policies.

House Rabbit Society
148 Broadway Richmond, CA 94804
www.rabbit.org

Rabbits and the outdoors...

We at The Bunny Burrow, along with our recommended veterinarians, watch in shock and grief as yet other rabbits lose their lives each summer because of being placed outdoors. The Texas heat is simply too intense for our house rabbits to survive. **NEVER HOUSE A DOMESTIC RABBIT OUTDOORS!**

WHAT ARE THE OTHER DANGERS?

1). **FLY STRIKE** – A fly lays eggs on your rabbit's skin, most often near his tail/genitals. As the eggs hatch, the larvae burrow into your rabbits flesh BY EATING YOUR RABBIT ALIVE. FLY LARVAE ARE MAGGOTS!!! You will not detect the problem until your rabbit is dead or in shock from the pain and toxins. Although this mostly happens with rabbits that have a wound or "dirty butt", it can happen with a healthy rabbit and certainly a sick one. Flies smell illness. Putting your rabbit outside to "cheer him up" could subject him to death by being eaten alive.

PREDATOR ATTACK – In the length of time it takes for you to walk back into your house to go to the bathroom or get a drink, a dog or feral cat can be in your yard and kill your rabbit. A very kind, caring family found this out when they placed their rabbits outside for about 15 minutes in order to clean their cage area. They believed they knew all neighboring pets. Sadly, their neighbors had brought in a dog from a shelter, and in less than 10 minutes he was into their backyard and shredded the rabbits. Again, an unnecessary and horrible loss of life.

HEAT STROKE – Your rabbit's temperature can rise at an alarming rate and literally bake your bunny alive. Rabbits are not able to pant, and so cannot relieve the heat at all. They suffer terribly in heat and humidity. The effects of heat can be cumulative, today they might not die but they will tomorrow. Animals can suffer terrible sunburn when they are not used to being outside and a rabbit or dog left in the sun can be severely burned. They might start out in the shade but the sun moves and your pet often can't. Don't take the chance with your pet's life.