



Los Angeles

Rabbit Foundation

BEFORE YOU ADOPT A BUNNY



Please Consider...

- 🐰 Do you have animals that could endanger the rabbit?
Rabbits can die of fright at the mere sound of predators, or from being chased. They're easily injured.
- 🐰 Rabbits are not low-maintenance pets.
Preparing greens, cleaning the litter box, and providing the attention your pet needs all require time.
- 🐰 Which adult in your family will be the primary caregiver?
What will you do if you have children – or if your children lose interest?
- 🐰 Are you prepared for a commitment of 10+ years to the bunny?
- 🐰 Can you afford the care?
Rabbits can cost \$100+/month. Veterinary care, including yearly vaccinations, is expensive.
- 🐰 If you are renting, are you allowed to have rabbits in your house or apartment?
- 🐰 Do you have the room? You'll need to have space for a pen, or a room that can be sectioned off for the bunny to live in.
- 🐰 Is your home 'bunny-proofed' with cords, houseplants and chemicals out of reach?
- 🐰 Do you have a way to keep temperatures consistently under 80F?
Rabbits are cool-weather animals and temperatures in the 80s and up can be fatal.



For more information on basic rabbit care, please visit www.LArabbits.org

FUN FACTS: Rabbits...

- Live 8-12 years
- Can use a litter box
- Regulate heat through their ear veins
- Require special veterinarians
- Make ideal apartment pets
- Learn their name

TO BUY FOR YOUR BUNNY

EXERCISE PEN or **PET GATE** to block off an area of your home for bunny to live in. 30" high minimum with a cover until you're sure bunny won't jump over.

LITTER BOX for the hay and litter. The larger, the better.

LITTER can be newspaper, plain wood pellets, aspen or paper-based commercial litters and white vinegar to clean the litter box. *Make sure the litter is safe for rabbits!*

WHITE VINEGAR to clean litter box.

GRASS HAY timothy grass, oat blend, or orchard grass.

RABBIT PELLETS plain pellets with no nuts, seeds, or colored bits.

FRESH PRODUCE leafy greens, including Romaine lettuce, parsley, and cilantro. *See our dietary recommendations below.*

WATER/FOOD BOWLS heavy crock big bowl for water and smaller one for food.

CARRIER hard plastic, preferably top opening, with an artificial sheepskin liner.

TOYS TO FLING AND CHEW jingle ball toys, organic willow or apple twigs.

HIDEAWAY untreated wooden houses or cardboard houses.

GROOMING TOOLS cat claw trimmer, rubber brush, styptic powder.

FLOORING tiles, linoleum or other solid surface are best until you know bunny won't chew carpets.

RABBIT-PROOFING cord covers and corner protectors.

Do NOT Buy: Wire cages, hutches, harnesses, hay racks, yogurt drops, salt licks, seed and nut treats.



DIETARY RECOMMENDATIONS

A healthy **ADULT** rabbit's diet should consist mainly of unlimited water and hay, measured, high-quality pellets, and fresh vegetables.

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Hay and a fresh bowl of water should be available 24 hours a day.

Pellets should be fresh and relatively high in fiber. (18% minimum fiber).

Do not purchase more than six weeks' worth of food at a time, as it will become spoiled.

No nuts, seeds, salt licks, or human foods!

IMPORTANT:
ALL dietary changes must be made gradually.

Select at least 3 kinds of fresh, clean, leafy green vegetables daily, but stay consistent.

REMEMBER: Overweight rabbits have a tough time cleaning themselves which can lead to infection.



80% of an adult rabbit's diet should be hay

Go to www.LArabbits.org for a list of safe vegetables and fruits, and for more detailed dietary information for **younger** rabbits and **old** rabbits

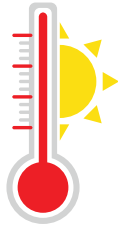
HOUSING

RABBIT PROOFING To rabbit proof a room:

- 🐰 Lift all electrical cords **out of reach or cover them** completely with cable wrap that your rabbit **cannot** chew through.
- 🐰 **Remove all** dangerous objects, chemicals and plants from reach.
- 🐰 **Cover** right angles on molding with inexpensive plastic corner protectors.
- 🐰 **Block off** problem areas with Neat Idea Cube panels or Plexiglas.

TEMPERATURES OVER 80° FAHRENHEIT CAN BE DANGEROUS FOR A RABBIT

Before you adopt a rabbit, consider how you will keep her cool. Air conditioning helps keep rabbits at a safe temperature; you will also want to have bottles of frozen water available in case your a/c or electricity are down. Ceramic tiles, extra bowls of water, and rinsed veggies also help keep your rabbit cool and hydrated.



Rabbits cannot pant nor perspire, but only regulate heat through their ear veins. For this reason and others, rabbits are much safer housed indoors than outdoors.

HOUSE RABBITS INDOORS ONLY

Domestic rabbits do not have the survival skills to live outside. They are prey animals with a minimal ability to defend themselves or avoid predators. Predators include dogs, raccoons (they open hutches), feral cats, hawks, owls, fly larvae, and more. Outdoor noises such as helicopters, sirens and fireworks are terrifying and can cause a heart attack.

Indoor rabbits are also significantly less likely to contract RHDV2, a highly-contagious and **lethal** viral disease.

Most importantly, you are less likely to notice when your rabbit is ill or needs your help if she is not living in your home with you. Rabbits feel lonely and frightened if left outdoors by themselves.

EXERCISE PEN OPTION Pens can be adjusted to fit various spaces and sizes. A 30"-36" high pen with a walk-through gate makes cleaning the pen and interacting with your rabbit easier.

WHY AN EXERCISE PEN ENVIRONMENT? If your rabbit is not able to live in a larger indoor bunny-proofed room or area, then an exercise pen is the next best thing:

- 🐰 Provides room for bunny to **move and hop a bit**.
- 🐰 Makes it easier for human **companions to interact** with the rabbit; bunny **does not "defend" against you** like in a cage.
- 🐰 Has room for **large toys, cardboard boxes, tunnels, hideaways**.
- 🐰 Is much **easier to clean** than a cage, especially when the rabbit is spayed/neutered and litter box trained.

Don't Forget

Bunny still needs exercise time outside of the pen, in a rabbit-proofed area!



ALTERNATIVES TO AN EXERCISE PEN Install a chew-proof baby gate across the doorway to one room, and bunny-proof that room, or section off an area of your home.



LITTER BOX TRAINING

During the two weeks following neuter surgery, or when you first bring your adopted bunny home, you will want to confine him to a puppy pen with linoleum or a hard plastic desk mat underneath.

Line a BIG cat litter box or other box made from hard plastic with a thin layer of rabbit-safe litter, then top off with grass hay (*oat blend, timothy, or orchard*).

Rabbits have better box habits and stay cleaner when there is plenty of hay on top of the litter.

Rabbits like to have a 'kitchen side' and 'bathroom side' inside the box.

REMEMBER: Never use disinfectant to clean the litter box, it can harm your rabbit, vinegar diluted with water works best

RABBIT SAFE LITTERS

100% softwood pellet litters or paper-based litters
(NO cedar or pine shavings)



HOW TO HANDLE YOUR RABBIT

BASIC RULES OF RABBIT HANDLING

- Do not pick up rabbits **unless necessary**
- Always support the rabbit's back
- Do **NOT** hold bunny upside down like a baby. This is called trancing and is VERY dangerous for your bunny.
- Never pick up a bunny by the ears!

Whenever possible, it's best to **interact with rabbits at their level**, either on the floor or on a chair or couch, rather than pick them up.



If you have to **pick up a rabbit**, here's how to do it right.



Pet your bunny gently on the top of the head. Then slide one hand under his front legs and place one hand on his back above the tail, so that as you pick him up, you are supporting him at both ends.

Lift gently but firmly until you have bunny securely in your arms at waist (*not shoulder*) level.

RABBIT FRIENDS

Rabbits are social animals and like to live with others, but introductions can be dangerous.

Consider adopting a pair of rabbits, so they keep one another company when you are not home.

Learn more about bonding rabbits with other rabbits, and more information on rabbit care at www.LArabbits.org



VETERINARY CARE

Rabbits don't show illness like cats and dogs, so any perceived problem should be treated as an emergency. One skipped meal could mean your rabbit is in danger.

Consult a rabbit-savvy veterinarian right away if:

- lack of appetite
- lump or swellings
- lethargy
- crusty ears
- overgrown teeth
- urine-soaked fur
- straining to urinate
- head tilt
- diarrhea
- few or no fecal pellets

or any other sudden behavior change.