



Top Tips for Taking Care of Rabbits

Housing Your Rabbits

Living Quarters Outdoors

The hutch must be tall enough for your rabbits to sit up on their hind legs and be able to hop at least 4 paces. This should lead to a secure run placed on grass that has not been soiled by other animals. Rabbits can suffer from heatstroke, so good ventilation and shade is of paramount importance. The roof should be waterproof and sloping to allow water to run off. Make sure that the hutch is secure to ensure your rabbits are not prey to foxes or other animals.

Living quarters Indoors

Rabbits chew, so it is vital to 'bunny-proof' your home. For example, cover electrical cables with plastic piping, move houseplants out of reach and keep the cage away from skirting boards. Do not allow access to any area painted with lead paint or where there is putty.

With proper training, your rabbits should be able to roam freely around your house for several hours a day but it is always best if they are supervised.

How often should you clean your rabbits' cage?

You should clean your rabbits' cage at least once a day. The floor of the hutch should be covered with newspaper or woodshavings with hay or straw on top.

Fly strike is a horrific condition. This occurs when flies are attracted to the smell of urine or faeces in the hutch (or on the rabbits) and lay their eggs, which rapidly develop into flesh eating maggots, so it is vital to keep your rabbits' cage clean at all times.

Feeding Your Rabbits

The importance of feeding your rabbits a correct diet cannot be emphasised too much. This will minimise the likelihood of dental problems. A rabbit's teeth grow constantly throughout their life and they need to chew a high fibre diet to ensure good dental health. The front (incisor) teeth grow up to 5 inches every year!

The most important feed is good quality HAY and/or GRASS ad lib (i.e. as much as they can eat, on offer 24 hours a day). Fresh, clean water should always be available. This is the basic fundamental requirement. Hay/grass only rabbits are healthy rabbits!!

A good selection of leafy greens e.g. spring greens and/or herbs daily. It is best to avoid fruit as this can very easily upset the rabbit's digestive system.

Taking Care of your Rabbits' Health

It is vitally important to have your rabbits vaccinated annually. This will protect against the ever present disease, Myxomatosis, which is sadly invariably fatal if unvaccinated rabbits are infected. The vaccination also protects against Rabbit Haemorrhagic Disease (RHD) which is also fatal and can infect rabbits very easily, as the virus can be carried in on hay or be airborne. Even house rabbits can be fatally infected with these diseases.

[Click here to learn more about Myxomatosis](#)

Neutering your Rabbits

Neutering is very important. Rabbits are social creatures and should not be kept singly. The best pair bond is a neutered male with a neutered female. Neutered rabbits live longer. A female rabbit is 80% likely to develop untreatable uterine cancer by the age of 5 years if she is not spayed. Ideally this should be performed between 5 to 12 months of age, but this depends on individual circumstances and should be discussed with your vet.

A very useful website advising on all aspects of rabbit health and welfare is www.rabbitwelfare.co.uk

At Larkmead Vets we are always happy to discuss any aspect of your rabbit's health or welfare, so please give us a call!