

## COMMON RABBIT DISEASES

1.) Gastrointestinal stasis: Rabbits have a very sensitive gut and either constipation or diarrhea can be fatal to a rabbit.

Contact your veterinarian immediately if you see any gastrointestinal signs or anorexia!

2.) Dental disease: Due to the perpetual growth of rabbit teeth, dental disease is another common affliction in pet rabbits.

Your rabbit's teeth should be checked annually by your veterinarian.

3.) Uterine cancer in female rabbits:

It is extremely common for adult female rabbits to get uterine adenocarcinoma.

It is critical to spay your rabbit at a young age.



## HOUSING



Whether it is an outdoor hutch or an indoor cage, the enclosure needs to be big enough for your rabbit to completely stretch out and lay down in. Most rabbit cages in the stores are too small. It is better to go big! Make sure your rabbit has a place in its enclosure to hide and feel secure. Cages should be cleaned weekly. Avoid completely mesh bottoms, as they will prevent digging and can cause pressure sores. Avoid wood shavings for bedding which can cause respiratory problems. The best is paper bedding without a strong odor or perfume. Finally, for outdoor rabbits, make sure any outdoor enclosures are secure and well protected at night. Also, consider flea/tick prevention and do not allow your rabbit on any pesticide treated grass.

For a complete list of works cited, ask a representative of  
Elmhurst Animal Care Center | 630.530.1900

## RABBIT CARE 101



A basic guide to the proper diet, housing and general care of your pet rabbit, to ensure a long and "hoppy" life

-Marina Jaworsky, DVM



# THE DOMESTIC RABBIT

The rabbit is a wonderful family pet with a big personality and sense of curiosity. Rabbits love to explore and can be quite social if properly taught at a young age. There are many different breeds and sizes, so it is important to know how big your rabbit will grow before adopting. Rabbits are meticulously clean and can be litter box trained. However, caring for your pet rabbit takes a lot of work and time, and rabbits are a long-term responsibility. Rabbits generally live for 8-12 years, sometimes the same lifespan as a dog!

## DIET BASICS | TIMOTHY HAY

The rabbit is a true herbivore and a member of the Lagomorpha order. They have continuously growing teeth that need to be constantly ground down to prevent the development of sharp points. Thus, it is essential to always offer timothy hay or orchard grass to your rabbit.

You cannot give them too much!

Please note, alfalfa hay is for growing bunnies only.



## VEGGIES & FRUITS & WATER

Vegetables are an essential part of your rabbit's diet and should be offered daily. You rabbit will have its favorites but try a variety! Fruits should only be offered in moderation. Also, rabbits drink a lot of water and should always have a clean water supply either in the form of a bowl or bottle. For a complete list of safe greens please visit: [rabbit.org/suggested-vegetables-and-fruits-for-a-rabbit-diet/](http://rabbit.org/suggested-vegetables-and-fruits-for-a-rabbit-diet/)



## PELLETS & TREATS

Rabbit pellets should comprise the smallest portion of your rabbit's daily diet. The best pellets are the "boring kind," meaning the pellets without any cereal, seeds, or other colorful additives. Your adult rabbit should only receive a few tablespoons of pellets each day. Finally, yogurt treats are dangerous and should **never** be given!



## EXERCISE & PLAY

Rabbits need daily exercise and time out of their cage to socialize with their family. When a rabbit is happy it will frolic, twirl, zig-zag and even stomp, so make sure your rabbit gets time to come out and play! A gated area is best, due to the mischievous nature of your rabbit. They love to chew and seem drawn to places they shouldn't be so it is key to "rabbit proof" the play pen. Carpet and electrical cords can be a big problem so keep a close eye on your pet when they are outside of their cage. They love to dig, rip and chew!