

Things To Consider:



What are domestic rabbits really like?

Rabbits rarely conform to the cute-n-cuddly stereotype. They prefer being on their feet versus being held. They are instinctively a prey animal and react to perceived danger by bolting away or jumping out of your arms. They feel frightened when people handle them, and can kick and struggle, which means children can also get hurt. Rabbits are physically delicate animals, and can be hurt easily by being picked up improperly. Rabbits prefer a quiet home. Stress-related illnesses are common. For these reasons, many children, find it difficult to interact with a rabbit and soon lose interest.

As the adult in the household, the rabbit will be your responsibility.

If your family is considering adopting a rabbit, decide how you and the other adults in the household feel about taking on the responsibility of a rabbit. Some children can lose interest in a new pet after a period of time. Rabbits can live up to 12 years. Decide whether you are ready to take on the responsibility of a rabbit yourself. If the rabbit will be an all-around family member (lives indoors, gets regular, supervised, out-of-cage time), then a child and rabbit can get to know each other and live together happily! If your child is a bit loud, is very active, can interact physically/aggressively, or frequently seems to need reminders about rules, they may find it difficult to build a relationship with a rabbit. You may find that a rabbit is an additional stress on you.



run.

jump.

binky.

▪ **Rabbits can be litter box trained** – Once spayed or neutered, rabbits prefer to use the bathroom in one area. Training can be challenging, but with patience, you can achieve success.

▪ **Allergies** - You should consider having testing done to see if anyone in your home has an allergy to rabbits or hay before you adopt a rabbit. Or, you could foster-to-adopt to see if anyone in your family has an allergy to either the dander or the hay.



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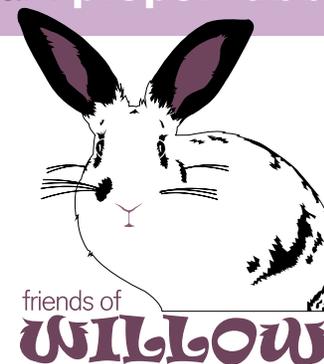


This information is not intended as a substitute for the expertise and judgement of a qualified veterinary professional.

Is a rabbit right for you?



A guide to help you decide and learn proper rabbit care



Rabbit Facts:

▪ Neutering helps with population control and keeps shelters from becoming over crowded

- Rabbits can have a litter of 1-12 kits every 30 days. Your two rabbits can turn into too many before you know it. Spaying and neutering assures your rabbit family stays the same size, helps reduce spraying and aggressive behavior and keeps them in better health! Spaying female rabbits is extremely important because of the high percentage rate of them developing uterine cancer if not spayed.

▪ **Rabbits can live up to 12 years** – Lifespan depends on the breed, size, and health of your rabbit. Rabbits are a long-term time commitment!

▪ **Rabbits need a large living space** - We recommend at least a 2' x 4' solid-bottom cage, x-pen or free range in your home. The living space should be away from high noise areas, but not isolated from people. Consider which area is most easily bunny-proofed for your rabbit's out-of-cage time, meaning there is nothing harmful your rabbit could get into, chew, or eat. If a cage or x-pen is right for your home the rabbit should be taken out at least a few hours everyday.

▪ **Rabbits need a varied diet** - Their digestive track is VERY sensitive and if it gets stopped up, they can get seriously ill, quickly. They need 80% fresh hay, 10% approved veggies/herbs, 5% rabbit food pellets, and 5% approved fruit or healthy treats. Some plants can be poisonous, so make sure to pick up or ask for our FOW Approved Plant Guide.

▪ There is a safe way to pick up a rabbit -

Rabbits and humans can be injured by improper handling techniques. Never pick a rabbit up by its neck scruff and never by its ears. Only pick a rabbit up by placing a hand under its chest and the other under its bottom. Quickly pull in the rabbit to your chest and have a secure hold. If the rabbit squirms out of your hold, lower your body as close to the ground as you can so when they jump out of your arms, the floor isn't too far down. With practice and patience your skills will improve and your rabbit will develop trust in you.

sniff.
sniff. munch.

▪ **Rabbit teeth never stop growing** - Rabbits' teeth never stop growing and to keep them at a healthy size they need to chew on hay or safe toys daily.

▪ **Rabbits like to be clean** - They prefer to live in a clean environment. The reason you may have heard people say 'they smell' is because some owners don't clean cages and litter boxes frequently enough. Rabbits have very sensitive noses and are also turned off by harsh cleaning chemicals, so all natural cleaners are best.

▪ **Rabbits are smart** - Rabbits have the intelligence of the average toddler. They also have long memories. They can learn tricks, play gentle games with humans, and recognize commands. They also bond quickly to their owners and can be shy with strangers. Each rabbit has its own personality, likes, and dislikes!

▪ **Rabbits can get sick** - A rabbit can develop an illness quickly and since they can't alert you verbally, it can turn very serious without you knowing. If your rabbit isn't eating or drinking, is lethargic and not acting normally, your best bet is to call your trusted rabbit vet ASAP to see if a visit is in order.

▪ **Rabbits get bored** - They need toys, much like toddlers, to provide mental stimulation - or they will make toys out of your belongings and get into trouble. Safe toys include untreated wood, approved branches, clean cardboard boxes, paper towel rolls, braided grass, various cat toys and even a stuffed toy rabbit friend to groom. Some great sites for toys are BunnyApproved.com, BusyBunny.com, BunnyBytes.com, or SmallPetSelect.com.

▪ **Rabbits do better with a friend** - Whether it is another spayed or neutered rabbit or a human companion. They are very social creatures! They enjoy grooming other rabbits and even grooming their humans.

▪ **Non-bonded rabbits will fight** - And they can seriously hurt each other. Rabbits are very territorial and will defend what they deem 'their area'. Make sure that, before introducing a new rabbit friend, they have fully bonded first. When bonding rabbits, make sure they have been spayed/neutered first. You will need to wait about 4-6 weeks after the surgery to bond them so hormone levels can decline. Bonding takes patience and may take multiple attempts. Some ways to bond entail putting your rabbits in neutral territory such as a room your rabbit has never been in before, the bathtub, or even a car ride.

Shopping List:

HOUSING

- Large x-pen, solid-bottom cage, or condo (tall enough that rabbit can stand up on its hind legs, long enough for hopping, and for the rabbit to stretch out full length)
- Litterbox (1 inside & 1 outside cage for playtime)
- Ceramic food bowl or feeder
- Large water bottle/ceramic crock bowl
- Bed sheets/pillowcases (for soft, slip-resistant cage flooring)
- Bunny-proofed room(s)
- Hideaway/shelter for rabbit to feel safe and hide

CONSUMABLES

- Limited Timothy-based food pellets daily for adults (Oxbow or Sweet Meadow brand, 1/4 cup per rabbit, make sure pellets have no colorful additives)
- Alfalfa food pellets/hay for rabbits under 1 year
- Unlimited Fresh water
- Unlimited Timothy Hay (for digestive fiber and chewing recreation)
- Approved fresh greens/veggies or fruit (fruit sparingly)
- Limited healthy treats (try oxbowanimalhealth.com)

HEALTH

- Experienced rabbit veterinarian (6 month or yearly check-ups)
- Hard-case pet carrier

GROOMING

- Comb/brush
- Nail clippers (cat or small dog, not human)

ENRICHMENT TOYS

- Hard baby car keys
- Hard plastic baby rattles
- Hard cat jingle balls

CHEWING TOYS

- Unpainted/undyed wicker or willow
- Maple, apple or willow tree branches
- Items made from grass
- Clean cardboard rolls or boxes

CLEANING

- Pooper scooper
- Broom/dustpan
- Non-chemical cleaner: white vinegar, Simple Green, or Nature's Miracle Cage Cleaner for Small Animals
- Hand vacuum
- Litter substrate for litterbox: Care Fresh, Yesterday's News, Wood Pellets, Aspen Shavings (do not substitute other types of shavings), Newspapers, Hay