

## THE GUIDE TO HAPPY HEALTHY RABBITS

New Bun	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Expect the unexpected.</li> <li>· Don't take anything personally.</li> <li>· It takes 4 weeks or so for a rabbit to feel safe in its new home. He/she will first explore <i>everything</i>.</li> <li>· Move slowly. In the wild rabbits are food for larger animals. To survive, they run first and ask questions later.</li> <li>· Rabbits want you down on the floor with them. (Not up in the air with you. Scary.)</li> <li>· Expect buns to chew so give them good stuff to chew on and play with right away. See STUFF <a href="http://www.rabbit.org/faq/sections/toys.html">http://www.rabbit.org/faq/sections/toys.html</a></li> <li>· Contact us (or any rabbit rescue) for help. <a href="mailto:RabbitMatch@inbox.com">RabbitMatch@inbox.com</a></li> <li>· Supplies: <a href="http://www.rabbitmatch.org/shoplist.htm">http://www.rabbitmatch.org/shoplist.htm</a></li> </ul>
Behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Rabbits are prey animals.</li> <li>· Rabbits are very social. They live in hierarchical groups in the wild.</li> <li>· Every rabbit has a unique personality.</li> <li>· They use their (1) ears, then (2) eyes, then (3) nose. So they will react to (1) noise, watch for (2) movement, and (3) sniff the air.</li> <li>· Rabbits don't make much noise.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Soft clicking sound = contentment</li> <li>Soft honking = contentment</li> <li>Squeaks = surprise/alarm</li> <li>Grunts = irritation/impatience</li> <li>Hard tooth grinding = pain</li> <li>High squeal = terror/pain</li> </ul> </li> <li>· Body language (along with the sounds they make) is different for every rabbit. It pays to watch and listen to your rabbit until you understand what s/he is 'saying'. <a href="http://www.rabbit.org/health/index.html#fun">http://www.rabbit.org/health/index.html#fun</a></li> <li>· Some generalizations in body language are:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Licking (grooming) = I like you!</li> <li>Chinning = ownership</li> <li>Turning their back/washing/grooming = ignoring you</li> <li>Jumping/shaking in the air (binkys) = happy</li> <li>Lunging with front paws = stop that!</li> <li>Nipping = Out of my way! Irritated.</li> <li>These shouldn't happen much after they're neutered unless threatened:                 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Boxing = You are invading my space!</li> <li>Biting = angry/frightened/threatened</li> <li>Spraying = territorial marking</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>· Bunny proof your home!             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="http://www.rabbit.org/faq/sections/rabbit-proofing.html">http://www.rabbit.org/faq/sections/rabbit-proofing.html</a></li> </ul> </li> <li>· Rabbits are very curious. They want to know every inch of their territory to feel safe.</li> <li>· Buns chew and dig. That's how they build their homes in the wild. Give them lots of stuff to chomp on = untreated straw baskets, wood blocks from the pet store, plastic cat toys that make noise, cardboard boxes, tubes, paper grocery bags, newspaper, phone books, sea grass mats.</li> <li>· Cover electrical cords with computer tubing! Rabbits chew them! They see them as roots!</li> <li>· Rabbits jump! A <i>general</i> rule is:</li> </ul>

	<p>Jump height = 2 ½ x rabbit's height when sitting up on back legs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Rabbits only use one phrase: Pet me! Feed me! Pet me!</li> <li>· Always think about what your rabbit is trying to do as a <u>survival skill</u> in the wild. Interpret it through your bun's eyes – don't take it personally!</li> <li>· Common myths about rabbits:  <a href="http://www.ontariorabbits.org/beginners/myths.html">http://www.ontariorabbits.org/beginners/myths.html</a></li> </ul>																																							
Feeding GENERAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Timothy-based pellets = two servings per day = 2T per 4 lbs of bun each feeding</li> <li>· FRESH WATER</li> <li>· Large handful of veggies 2 x per day. (See Foods YES and Foods NO)</li> <li>· Learn to watch how much your rabbit eats and drinks in a day. This can tell you very rapidly if your bun isn't feeling well. See Medical</li> <li>· Hay -- all they can eat = timothy and/or oat (NO alfalfa*)        *Feed alfalfa to buns under 6 months old. No alfalfa for buns over 6 months.</li> <li>· Buy hay in bulk, not the stuff in pet stores        It's healthier + it's cheaper</li> <li>· Links for supplies:        · <a href="http://www.rabbitmatch.org/shoplist.htm">http://www.rabbitmatch.org/shoplist.htm</a></li> <li>· Rabbit digestion is very sensitive. Once you establish a healthy diet for your bun make changes slowly! See Medical SIGNS TO WATCH FOR -- STASIS</li> <li>· Add one vegetable to the diet at a time. Eliminate if it causes soft stool or diarrhea.</li> <li>· General info: <a href="http://rabbit.org/faq/sections/diet.html">http://rabbit.org/faq/sections/diet.html</a></li> </ul>																																							
Foods YES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· See Feeding General and Foods NO</li> <li>· Veggies list: from <a href="http://rabbit.org/care/veggies.html">http://rabbit.org/care/veggies.html</a></li> </ul> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Alfalfa, radish sprouts</td> <td>Clover</td> <td>Parsley*</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Basil</td> <td>Collard greens*</td> <td>Pea pods (flat kind)*</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Beet greens (tops)*</td> <td>Dandelion greens *</td> <td>Peppermint leaves</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Bok choy</td> <td>Endive*</td> <td>Raddichio</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Broccoli (leaves/stems)*</td> <td>Escarole</td> <td>Radish tops</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Brussels sprouts</td> <td>Green peppers</td> <td>Raspberry leaves</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Carrot &amp; carrot tops*</td> <td>Kale (!)*</td> <td>Romaine lettuce</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Celery</td> <td>Mint</td> <td>Spinach (!)*</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cilantro</td> <td>Mustard greens*</td> <td>Watercress*</td> </tr> </table> <p>*One each day that contains Vitamin A. Add one vegetable to the diet at a time. Eliminate if it causes soft stools or diarrhea.    (!)=Use sparingly. High in either oxalates or goitrogens and may be toxic in accumulated quantities over a period of time</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Fruits list from: <a href="http://rabbit.org/care/fruits.html">http://rabbit.org/care/fruits.html</a></li> </ul> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Apple (no stems/seeds)</td> <td>Papaya</td> <td>Plums/prunes</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Blueberries</td> <td>Peach</td> <td>Raspberries</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Melon</td> <td>Pear</td> <td>Strawberries</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Orange (incl peel)</td> <td>Pineapple</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Feed tiny amounts of fruit treats once in awhile = 1 raisin, 1t apple. Too much fruit can cause diarrhea and overweight! Sugary fruits such as bananas and grapes should be used only sparingly, as occasional treats. Bunnies have a sweet tooth and will devour sugary foods instead of the healthy ones.</li> </ul>	Alfalfa, radish sprouts	Clover	Parsley*	Basil	Collard greens*	Pea pods (flat kind)*	Beet greens (tops)*	Dandelion greens *	Peppermint leaves	Bok choy	Endive*	Raddichio	Broccoli (leaves/stems)*	Escarole	Radish tops	Brussels sprouts	Green peppers	Raspberry leaves	Carrot & carrot tops*	Kale (!)*	Romaine lettuce	Celery	Mint	Spinach (!)*	Cilantro	Mustard greens*	Watercress*	Apple (no stems/seeds)	Papaya	Plums/prunes	Blueberries	Peach	Raspberries	Melon	Pear	Strawberries	Orange (incl peel)	Pineapple	
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Foods NO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· NO CHOCOLATE – poisonous to rabbits</li> <li>· NO PEOPLE FOOD – dangerous to their digestive system</li> <li>· NO onions = toxic</li> <li>· NO light green iceberg lettuce = no food value + diarrhea</li> </ul>																																							

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some foods can cause gas pains, just like in humans.</li> </ul> <p><i>IMPORTANT: Toxic plants list:</i> <a href="http://www.adoptarabbit.com/articles/toxic.html">http://www.adoptarabbit.com/articles/toxic.html</a></p>
Living Conditions CAGE/PEN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Give your bun as much room to roam as you can. Start with small area and gradually make it bigger. Our rabbits have a whole room!</li> <li>Rabbits are easily litterbox trained. <a href="http://rabbit.org/faq/sections/litter.html">http://rabbit.org/faq/sections/litter.html</a></li> <li>Cages are unnecessary and unhealthy. If restricting your bun is important, a 4 x 4 ft pen is the minimum for a healthy happy bun.</li> <li>Or use NIC cubes to build a bunny condo. Ideas: <a href="http://www.rabbitmatch.org/RabbitRealEstate.pdf">http://www.rabbitmatch.org/RabbitRealEstate.pdf</a></li> <li>Rabbits in the wild live in burrows with more than one entrance/exit. This is for safety so they can always get away. CAUTION: if housed in a cage rabbits may become 'cage defensive'. (They bite! Hard.)</li> <li>In your rabbit's head: <a href="http://rabbit.org/journal/2-12/tools-of-the-trade.html">http://rabbit.org/journal/2-12/tools-of-the-trade.html</a></li> </ul>
Living Conditions STUFF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Litterbox (large enough to turn around in comfortably or the larger, the better)</li> <li>NO PINE, CEDAR OR CLUMPING CAT LITTER = toxic to buns More info: <a href="http://www.rabbit.org/faq/sections/litter.html">http://www.rabbit.org/faq/sections/litter.html</a></li> <li>In the bottom of the litterbox use corn cob, Yesterday's News, Care Fresh or a thick section of folded newspaper. Use any of these <b><i>with lots of hay on top!</i></b></li> <li>Clean litterbox every two days</li> <li>Water bowl (heavy, non-tippable) or liter-sized sipper bottle</li> <li>Food bowl</li> <li>Toys! See Behavior <a href="http://www.rabbit.org/faq/sections/toys.html">http://www.rabbit.org/faq/sections/toys.html</a></li> </ul>
Medical GENERAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Find a RABBIT SAVVY vet <i>before</i> an emergency: <a href="http://rabbit.org/care/vets.html">http://rabbit.org/care/vets.html</a> or contact a local rabbit rescue organization</li> <li>Most vets don't have experience with rabbits. <i>Find a rabbit vet!</i> For example: the antibiotic, Amoxicillin, used for cats/dogs is <u>deadly</u> to rabbits. Be careful! Avian/exotic vets are usually (not always!) versed in rabbit medicine. Info: <a href="http://www.rabbit.org/health/index.html#litterbox">http://www.rabbit.org/health/index.html#litterbox</a> <a href="http://www.rabbit.org/journal/4-1/HRJ4.1_Health.html">http://www.rabbit.org/journal/4-1/HRJ4.1_Health.html</a></li> <li>SPAY OR NEUTER YOUR BUN! It alleviates most male aggressive behavior and lessens the very high female reproductive cancer rate. Buns can reproduce every 3 months! That adds up to LOTS of buns who won't have homes. <a href="http://www.rabbit.org/health/spay.html">http://www.rabbit.org/health/spay.html</a></li> <li>DO NOT USE FLEA PRODUCTS (especially Frontline) ON YOUR BUN = toxic</li> <li>Revolution (for kittens) administered by a rabbit vet is okay.</li> <li>Rabbits can't vomit. So a healthy digestive system is <i>vital</i> to their health.</li> <li>Rabbit stools are round, medium brown and firm (not hard). Each rabbit has a different size stool. Know your bun's! This is an early warning for medical problems.</li> <li>Rabbits ingest their own special stools called cecals or cecotropes. They usually gather them straight from the source (!!!). Most other stool will end up in their litterbox.</li> <li>More info: <a href="http://www.rabbit.org/health/index.html#gi">http://www.rabbit.org/health/index.html#gi</a></li> <li>Overweight rabbits can't clean themselves, so you'll have to do it for them. Much healthier and easier to keep them trim.</li> </ul>
Medical SIGNS TO WATCH FOR	<p>All of these need a rabbit vet's intervention immediately:</p> <p>SORE HOCKS: Hind feet (heels) can develop sores from wire mesh cage bottoms (another reason for not using a cage).</p> <p>TOOTH PROBLEMS: Buns can develop molar spurs that are very painful.</p>

	<p>EAR MITES: Head flapping side to side; brown scale inside ears.</p> <p>HEAD TILT: Buns can develop a head tilt that will affect their balance and stop eating. Very serious.</p> <p>HEAT STROKE/DEATH: Buns overheat quickly. On days over 80°F, use air conditioning, add ice bottles or other means of cooling to your bun's living space (another reason buns need to live indoors).</p> <p>STASIS: A bun's stomach slows down and then stops processing food. Signs are: not eating or drinking; lethargic; hunched (pain). Can cause death in 24 hours if not treated aggressively by a rabbit vet.</p> <p>ABSCESSSES: Sores that become infected. Can be internal as well as external.</p> <p>These are just some of the medical conditions that affect rabbits. See Books &amp; Websites below for <i>excellent</i> resources on bun medical information or this link: <a href="http://www.rabbit.org/faq/sections/medical.html">http://www.rabbit.org/faq/sections/medical.html</a></p> <p>KNOW YOUR BUN WELL.  BUNS CAN DIE IN 24 HOURS IF NOT TREATED  TAKE TO RABBIT VET AS SOON AS PROBLEM IS NOTICED = SAFE OR SORRY</p>
Grooming & Handling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· How to pick up a rabbit: <a href="http://youtube.com/watch?v=Gygx7hZH4fg">http://youtube.com/watch?v=Gygx7hZH4fg</a></li> <li>· Turn bun facing away from you. Put one hand around bun's chest behind the front legs and the other hand right above the tail. Scoop butt as you lift back and up to your chest, rolling the bun into 'a ball' (feet will be out in front and high with nothing to kick against). Support the buns back against your chest, backside cupped in one hand, other hand securely around the buns chest under its front legs. Stay as close to the ground as possible to avoid injury to your bun if it wiggles away from you. <a href="http://www.rabbit.org/journal/3-11/lift.html">http://www.rabbit.org/journal/3-11/lift.html</a></li> <li>· Pick up rabbits carefully. <u>DO NOT</u> lift by the ears or scruff of neck.</li> <li>· Their spines can be broken by holding them too tightly or picking them up without supporting their backsides.</li> <li>· Rabbit hygiene: <a href="http://www.rabbit.org/faq/sections/groom.html">http://www.rabbit.org/faq/sections/groom.html</a></li> <li>· Rabbits groom each other by licking. To talk to your bun in its language, try using your finger to gently 'lick' its face.</li> <li>· They also lean into each other, or lay on top of each other. When your bun is mellow, use your hand to gently press on their back or up against their side; they'll think you're another bun.</li> <li>· Usually nails are clipped for free at rabbit rescue adoption venues and should be done about every 6-8 weeks.</li> <li>· Rabbits shed continuously but heavily only 2 x per year. Brush them often.</li> <li>· Rabbits have no odor. But their urine does and it has an ammonia smell. Remember to change the litter box every other day.</li> </ul>
Books & Websites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Rabbit Health in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century = all info medical!!!</li> <li>· Guide to the Urban Rabbit</li> <li>· House Rabbit Society: <a href="http://rabbit.org/hrs-info/site-map.html">http://rabbit.org/hrs-info/site-map.html</a> <a href="http://www.rabbit.org/journal/index.html">http://www.rabbit.org/journal/index.html</a></li> </ul>
And for buns everywhere...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Rabbits are not Easter toys.</li> <li>· They are a 6-10 year commitment.</li> <li>· They are not small children's pets.</li> <li>· They are social animals. GET TWO.</li> </ul>