

Bringing Rabbit Home...

So the big day has finally arrived to bring home your new bunny! How exciting!

It's important to remember that for bunny, it isn't exciting, but very frightening and stressful. She will be nervous about all the changes. She will be experiencing all new sights, sounds and smells. There is so much for her to take in. For a prey animal, this can be overwhelming. The quicker she can settle in, the less stressed she will be.

Fortunately, there are ways to make the transition as stress-free as possible. So let's get ready!

Have her cage situated where it will be normally kept. Whatever spot you have chosen to keep her cage, be sure it is in its place.

Have the cage completely set-up: Have the litter box filled and set in place. Have hay already in the cage. Have the water bowl filled and in place. Have the empty food dish in place. A couple toys can also be placed in the cage. If you have a bed or fabric for the cage, you may want to hold off on putting that in the cage until bunny has adjusted to the new litter box.

(glue car cutout here, titled "Getting Your Bunny")

Along with your rabbit, be sure that you are given several days' supply of the pelleted food that your rabbit has been eating. Even if you intend to feed your bunny a different pellet, now is not the time to change her diet.

Car rides are also stressful, so keep bunny comfortably cool in her carrier. Go straight home – no stops along the way.

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As soon as you arrive home, place some of the pelleted food that you received from the shelter in bunny's new food dish. Then immediately place bunny into her new cage then shut the cage door.

Once the first 48 hours have passed, it is time to **get to know your bunny** better. It's a good idea to have a limited area for bunny to roam when she first is allowed out. That way she can easily find her way back to her cage. An x-pen can form a half circle around the cage to give her a safe area to explore. Simply open her cage door and allow her to come out on her own. She will come out when and as she feels ready. **Be patient.** Do not reach into her cage and force her out. This will only cause mistrust, violate her "space" and slow the bonding process. Try sitting on the floor in the area. At first, just ignore her. Allow her to come close to you. This is how she learns that you are "safe." Slow & steady is the way to build that trusting relationship with your new bunny. The following sites will help you to know your bunny's body language and bond with her more.

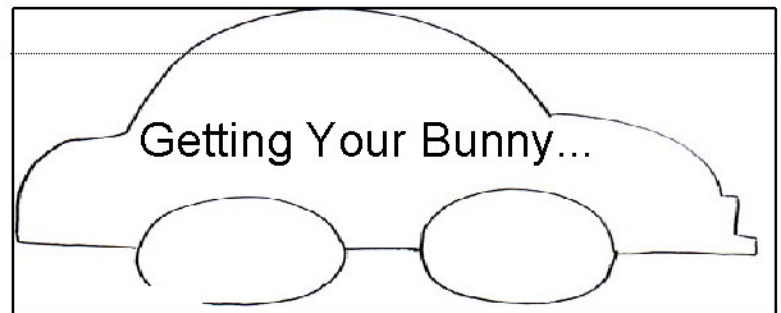
<http://language.rabbitspeak.com/>

<http://www.wikihow.com/Bond-With-Your-Rabbit>

Cut out the house shape below. Then fold it on the fold line and glue it to the appropriate place on "Bringing Rabbit Home" page.



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Cut out the *shape* of the car to the left. Then fold it on the fold line and glue it to the appropriate place on "Bringing Rabbit Home" page.

Cut out the house shape below. Then fold it on the fold line and glue it to the appropriate place on "Bringing Rabbit Home" page.

The First 48 Hours...

Now comes the hard part: for the next 48 hours, leave your bunny undisturbed. Go about your normal routine so that bunny can learn to get used to the new normal sounds and sights and smells. Whatever activity normally occurs in the area around her cage, should continue to occur as usual.

Do not reach into her cage to pet her. The only time your hand should go in the cage during these first 2 days is to replenish food or water or hay. Do not change her litterbox. Do not let her out of her cage.

This 48 hour regimen helps bunny to adjust in the quickest way possible. It also helps bunny to establish this new cage as her space, her "safe zone." This will be immensely helpful when you begin to let her out for her daily exercise. She will have learned the location of her litterbox and where to retreat when she desires.

With all the excitement of having a new bunny, please refrain from having many curious visitors approaching bunny's cage. Once bunny settles in, there will be plenty of time for all of that.

Feeding Bunny...

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No doubt about it – bunnies love sweets! Too much sugar, though, is not healthy. One or two tablespoons of fruit is the max daily amount recommended. Carrots are high in sugar too and should be considered a treat just like fruit. So if bunny gets a slice of apple one day, he should not receive any carrot that same day. Store bought treats are not good. Seeds, cereals, rabbit "treats" and yogurt drops should be avoided. See <http://www.bio.miami.edu/hare/diet.html>

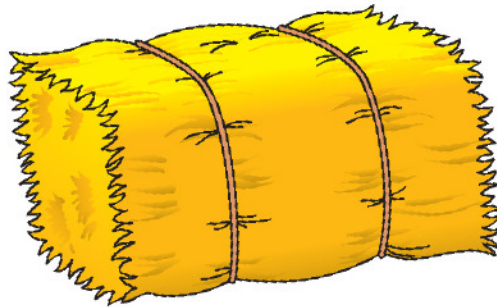
<http://rabbit.org/natural-nutrition-part-ii-pellets-and-veggies-2/>
To change your bunny's brand of pellets, it's necessary to do so gradually so as not to upset their delicate digestive system. Mix a small amount of the new brand in with the old when feeding. Over the next several days, gradually increase the proportion of new to old pellets. By the end of 1 or 2 weeks, bunny should be ready to have just the new brand.

2+ cups GREENS

A variety of greens is healthy, fun and entertaining for your bunny.
Introduce new greens one at a time to check for bunny's tolerance. If poos get mushy, then don't feed that particular type.

For more detail, see
<http://binkybunny.com/BUNNYINFO/tabid/53/Default.aspx>

unlimited HAY



The long strands of real hay are essential for providing the fiber and roughage that a bunny's gut needs. Compressed timothy cubes are no substitute for the long hay (but they are a healthy treat).

The bulk of bunny's diet should be hay. It is the one part of his diet that he should never ever be without.

Hay should be refreshed every day, regardless of whether he has finished what he already has. (Buying a bale or partial bale can be an inexpensive way to supply your bunny.)


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 Bunny" page.

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A healthy pellet will have no extras or anything else. Those sold as food. Read the label to see the first listed first for juveniles, timothy Essentials or Oxbow Organic, and have pellets specifically for juveniles or adults. Adult rabbits should be fed (5-7 lb rabbit). For more detail

0-2
 tbsp
TREATS




mixed in – no seeds or dried fruit "gourmet" mixes are bunny junk ingredient. Alfalfa should be hay for adults. Oxbow Zupreem's Nature's Promise for juveniles or adults. approx. ¼ cup of pellets or for larger rabbits, see

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0-2
 tbsp
TREATS




1/4 cup
PELLETS

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 Bunny" page (after flap
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0-2
 tbsp
TREATS



1/4 cup
PELLETS

2+ cups
GREENS



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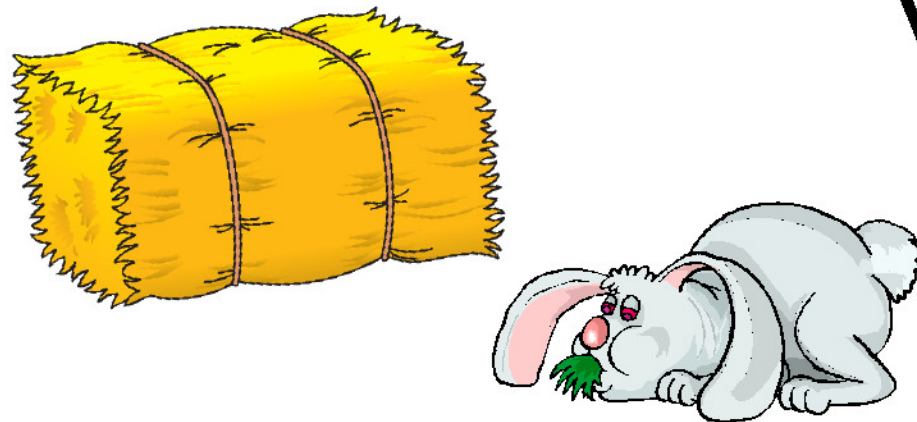
Adult (7 months & up)

- ◆ **Unlimited timothy hay (or other grass hay)**
- ◆ **2-4 cups of fresh greens daily**
- ◆ **Limited pellets (timothy-based)**

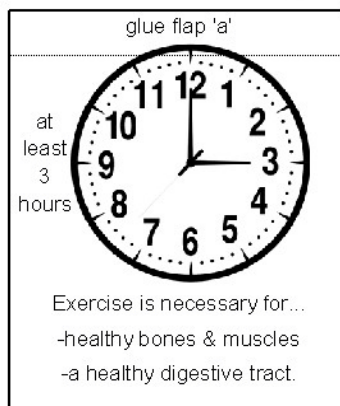
Juvenile (under 7 months)

Younger rabbits are growing and so need a different diet than an older rabbit.

- ◆ **Unlimited alfalfa hay (or alfalfa mixed with timothy)**
- ◆ **Unlimited pellets (alfalfa-based)**
- ◆ **Greens should be introduced no earlier than 3 months of age (12 weeks)**



Fun & Exercise...



Seeing a bunny perform a binky or the bunny-500 is one of the joys of having a rabbit. These are displays of happiness. A binky is a sudden leap in the air or a leap accompanied by a twist. The bunny-500 is a seeming mad-dash about an area.

However, a bunny needs room and lots of it in order to get this type of fun exercise. Even with a large cage, rabbits still need daily exercise outside their cage.



Ideally, bunny should have an entire room or a series of rooms/ hallways in which to explore. This area will need to be bunny-proofed to protect your belongings and to protect your rabbit. He could get shocked chewing through cords or be harmed ingesting unsafe materials.

Electrical cords are a bunny favorite, so all cords need to be out of reach or covered. Especially be careful of phone chargers and game controller cords which aren't always in the same place.

For more details on bunny proofing, check here:
<http://www.binkybunny.com/BUNNYINFO/tabid/53/CategoryID/8/PID/940/Default.aspx>

Or just go to www.binkybunny.com and click on 'bunny info' then 'bunny proofing.'

glue flap 'b'

TIP: When first allowing your bunny out for exercise, begin small. Block off an area around her cage so she can hop out when she feels comfortable.

The idea here is for her to learn that she has quick retreat back to her "safety zone," and also where to go back to if she needs her litter box.

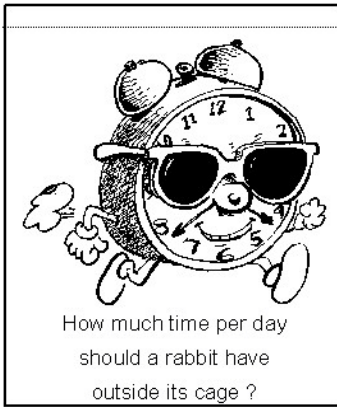
Gradually increase her area as she shows that she consistently returns to her litter box as needed. For this reason, it is best if her exercise area is in the same place as her cage.

glue flap 'c'

Whenever your rabbit is confined to his cage, he should have a variety of toys to keep him occupied. Keep some toys set aside so they can be rotated with toys he seems bored with. What types of toys that interest your rabbit will be for you to discover. Sometimes the favored toys are the free ones.

For playtime outside the cage, try using larger cardboard boxes with 'doorways' and 'windows' cut out.

More ideas here: <http://www.3bunnies.org/playtime.htm>

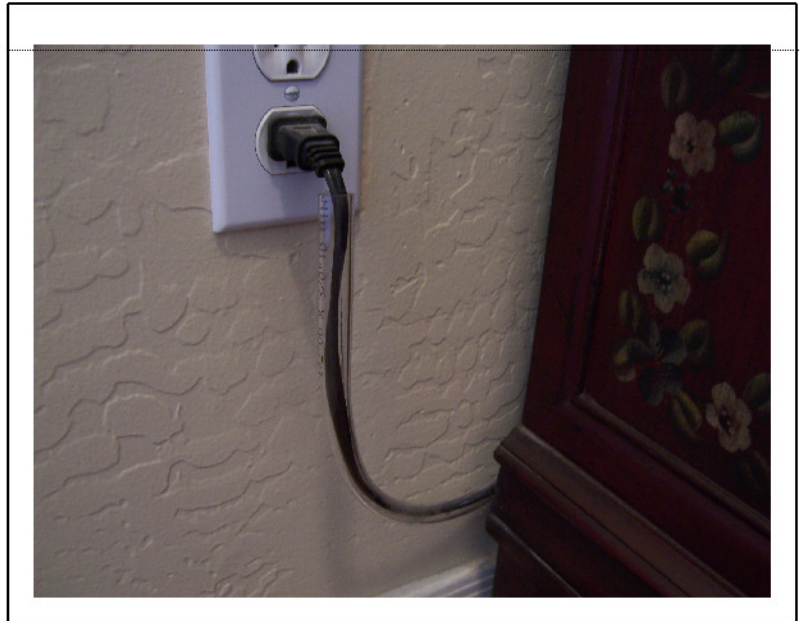


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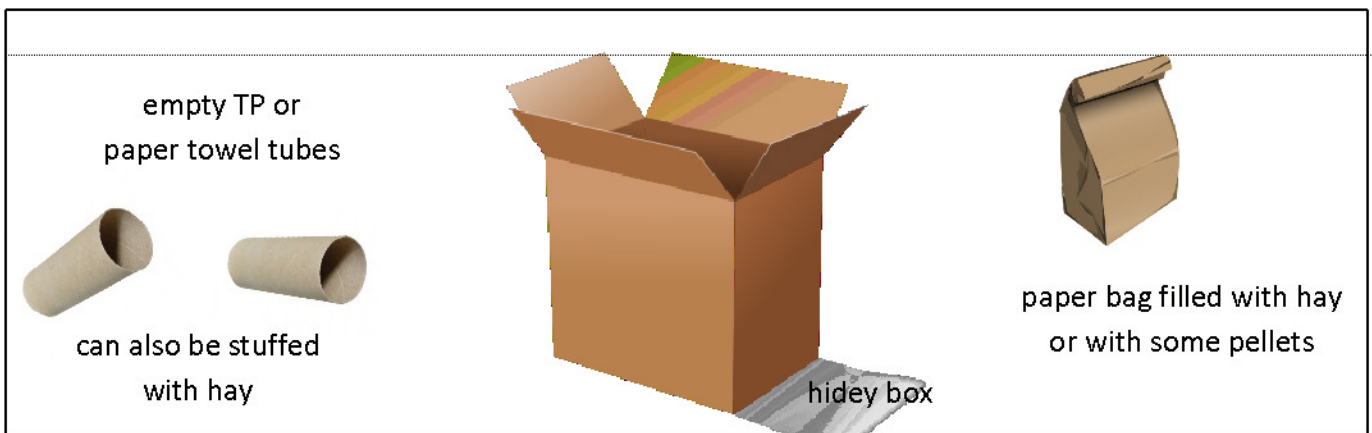
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Bunny's Health...

Grooming

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Rabbits do shed a few times per year. During this time care must be taken that they do not ingest too much fur which could cause a gut blockage. Be sure bunny is getting plenty of hay to help with digestion. Also, brush your bunny regularly -- especially when he's shedding. Keep a close eye on his poos too. If they are strung together like pearls, that is a result of ingesting too much fur.

An indoor bunny will also need his nails clipped regularly. The rabbit rescue will be happy to show you how to do this.

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Rabbits are meticulous about keeping themselves clean. They are constantly grooming themselves and their bondmate (if they have one).

With a clean cage and regular litter box changes, your rabbit should never be smelly. If a rabbit is smelly, it's a pretty sure bet that it has to do with the cage conditions.

So the solution will be to clean the cage, not the rabbit. Baths are not recommended. Doing so is risky and could lead to shock or death.

Read more at

<http://www.rabbit.org/faq/sections/groom.html>



Warning Signs

Rabbits are masters at disguising sickness. It takes an attentive eye to notice subtle changes that could indicate a problem. Here are a few common indicators to look for:

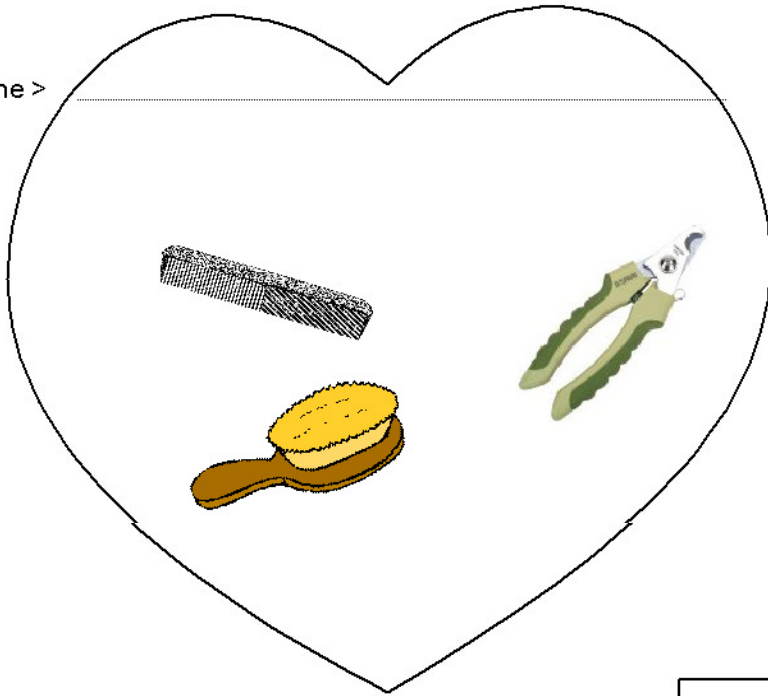
Poos: a typical rabbit dropping is firm and round, about the size of cocoa puffs. This may vary for some rabbits, but be sure to know what is usual for your rabbit. Any changes in size, consistency or quantity should put you on alert. If you see such changes, monitor closely, stop all treats and encourage more hay eating. If this is accompanied with a decrease or lack of appetite, then it's time to see the vet.

Decrease or loss of appetite: a rabbit's gut needs to keep working. If it stops (stasis) this is called GI stasis. A careful owner will notice the signs leading up to GI stasis and should be able to reverse it. The sooner measures can be taken to reverse this slow down, the better. Full blown GI stasis results in death. If a rabbit is uncomfortable from resulting gas build-up, he won't eat. This exacerbates the problem. A trip to the vet will be needed so pain medicine can be administered and bunny can start eating again. When in doubt, ask your vet. It's a good idea to have critical care on hand along with a syringe with a wide opening for administering the critical care.

Sneezing, runny nose and/or eyes: it is not usual for a rabbit to have any discharge from his eyes or nose. If he is sneezing or has clear discharge, it's possible he is allergic to something in his environment (often this can be from hay type or litter type) or he simply has a tickle in his nose. If the discharge is milky or yellow or any other color, than he'll need to be seen by the vet. This is typically an infection and will need medicine. Snuffles is the name often given to this.

For a list of other possible ailments, see: <http://www.3bunnies.org/health.htm>

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Here's an extra page of clipart that can be used for cutouts to decorate your Pet Rabbit Handbook

