

Wonder Bunny Basics • Caring for Your Bunny

DIET



Bunnies love to eat!!! A healthy bunny produces about 300 droppings a day. Early in the morning they also produce special droppings called *cecotropes* that look like little clusters of grapes that kind of stink. Your bunny needs to eat them to stay healthy!! These *cecotropes* are nutrient dense and are essential for a healthy gut. If your bunny does not eat at breakfast or dinner, you have a sick bunny and it should be considered an emergency.

For a bunny to stay healthy, it is essential that she eats a very healthy diet comprised of:
75% of diet: grassy hay such as Timothy, Orchard and Bluegrass. They are low in protein and calcium (this is good) yet provide roughage to keep gut moving and keep teeth worn down. Bunny teeth continuously grow!



2 small salads a day comprised of at least 2-3 different varieties including: Romaine, Green Leaf, Red Leaf, Butter, Escarole, Chicory endive, Cilantro, Bok Choy, Spring mix, Swiss Chard, especially Dandelion (no pesticides please!) normally found at Euro stores and Parsley. Kale should be given only in small quantities since it can cause painful gas. Bunnies also enjoy fresh herbs such as basil, mint, lemon balm, rosemary and dill.



Timothy pellets (such as Oxbow) are also given in small quantities. Pellets were created as an easy way to feed meat rabbits. It is not a “natural” food for bunnies. Sugars are used to bind the ingredients making it very desirable to the bunny palate (bunnies are carb crazy!!) The pellets do provide essential vitamins and minerals that may be lacking in a more natural diet. Therefore, an average sized bunny (5 lbs.) should get about a 1/8 cup a day but divided into 3 portions: breakfast, dinner and “night night time.”

TREATS

Treats should be given very sparingly. Only trouble comes from sugary treats such as apple, grapes, bananas and yes carrots. Just about every new bunny parent I have met has had the dubious experience of rushing to the emergency vet because the bunny has stopped eating and pooping (called GI Stasis known as the “silent killer”.) Oxbow also makes treats that can be given with ingredients providing health benefits. Fresh water should always be available.

GROOMING



Bunnies should be brushed 3 times a week or daily during shedding season. Bunnies will molt (shed) 4 times a year. Sometimes, excessive shedding can cause problems for your bunny. Perhaps she is not eating enough hay, eating too many sugary treats or not drinking enough water. This can cause your bunny not to eat and poop. If you start to see her droppings being strung together by fur, try to increase hay consumption by removing pellets. Also it can help to use products like Laxatone (vet office) and Sentry Digestive Aid (Petco) in malt flavor. These products help push the hair through. Give about a 1 inch strip to a 5 lb. bunny. Also, when hair is accumulating, it can cause gas which is very painful. If your bunny’s tummy feels distended, give 1 ml of baby Simethicone (Walmart sells for about \$3.99.)

A mani/pedi (nail trimming) should be done every 6 weeks.

“HOME-BUNNIES”



Domestic bunnies (house buns) should be kept indoors. If you would like to bring your bunny outside, be sure the visit to the great outdoors is closely supervised. You will also then need to consider treating your bun with revolution to prevent your bunny getting fleas and mites!!! Yuck!! Bunnies really need to be part of the family. When not at home, your bunny needs to be kept in either a puppy pen or even better a room of the house that has been bunny proofed!

If bunny is kept in a pen, she will need a minimum of 4 hours of playtime outside the pen.

LITTER



We use wood stove pellets for litter. We buy them from Menards and usually cost \$4.99/40 lb. bag. They can be found near the fireplaces. They are very absorbent and cost effective. We like the cat litterboxes from Walmart. They are under \$5 and are very roomy for your bun's bun!!! Because bunnies like to poop where they eat, place a good handful of hay at one end of the litterbox.

VETERINARY CARE



Northwest Exotic Veterinary Clinic

572 Bartlett Rd., Streamwood, IL 60107

630-540-2490

We love our vet Dr. Mary Grabowski from Northwest Exotic Veterinary Clinic.

She and her staff are super nice (which is very important during an unexpected trip to the vet!!)

If you experience an EMERGENCY when her office is closed, your best options are:



Midwest Bird and Exotic

7510 w. North Ave., Elmwood Park, IL

708-453-4755

****They always have a bunny savvy vet 24/7****



Blue Pearl

3736 W. Dempster St., Skokie, IL

847-673-9110



REMEMBER:

BUNNIES ARE HIGHLY SOCIAL AND SENSITIVE ANIMALS AND ALMOST ALWAYS DO BEST LIVING IN PAIRS.