

### Lifespan

With good care the average lifespan is about 8-12 years.

### Behaviors

Rabbits should ideally be kept in pairs since they are social animals. Females can be kept together or a neutered male with a female but two males together will often fight. Rabbits are very curious and love to play and suffer if they are bored or lonely. Cat toys (plastic can be chewed up however), cardboard boxes, toilet paper rolls all provide entertainment and chewing opportunities. They enjoy time to explore outside of their cage but can be destructive by chewing on household items like baseboards and cords. Make sure your rabbit is closely supervised if out of its cage.

Rabbits don't generally like being held or carried and can hurt themselves if they jump out of your arms so it is better to play with them on the floor. When you do have to pick them up support their hindend and hold them close to your body so they feel more secure. Their powerful kick can actually fracture their spine if not supported!

Rabbits are very sensitive to heat and should be kept in areas less than 80 degrees. It is much safer to keep rabbits indoors where they are safe from predators and adverse weather.

You may see your rabbit eat its own feces – this is normal and contributes to a healthy digestive system.

### Spaying and Neutering

Females have a high rate of uterine cancer so they should be spayed when they are at least 4 months old. Neutering males can make them better, more calm and loving companions by decreasing aggression and destructive behaviors.

### Housing

Rabbits need a solid bottom cage (not wire) at least four feet long and two feet deep. That space needs to be doubled for a large rabbit or two rabbits kept together. Time outside of the cage to explore a safe bunny-proofed area is great enrichment. They will chew wood and plastic so only ceramic or metal dishes should be used. Water bowls get very dirty so water bottles attached to the side of the cage should be used. Rabbits can be litter trained, which then allows some rabbits to be able to roam freely in a bunny-proofed room of the house.

### Diet and Nutrition

All of the teeth of rabbits grow continuously throughout their life. Chewing grass hay wears the teeth down to keep them at an appropriate length. Hay also keeps the digestive tract functioning well and prevents obesity and diarrhea. Grass hay (timothy, orchard, oat hay, etc) is absolutely necessary to the health of your rabbit and should be available in unlimited quantity at all times. Alfalfa hay should only be used in rabbits less than a year old or if they're pregnant/nursing.

Pellets specifically formulated for rabbits should be offered a maximum of ¼ cup per 5 lbs of body weight per day. Avoid mixes with nuts, corn, seeds, and fruit.

Leafy greens like romaine and red leaf lettuce can be offered as treats as often as once daily. Fruits should be offered very sparingly as they can cause digestive upset.

### Signs of Illness

If your rabbit is not eating or not pooping it needs to be seen by a vet right away. Even having smaller than normal fecal pellets warrants a vet visit. Sneezing, discharge from the eyes, nose, or ears are also problems that need veterinary attention.



### Most of an adult rabbit's diet should be hay!

