



## Rabbit Care

Congratulations on the purchase of your new rabbit! We know that caring for your rabbit can be fun. Similar to cats and dogs, rabbits make wonderful pets. Rabbits can be quite easy to care for, however there are a number of ailments and diseases that can occur from time to time. We hope that this advice sheet may answer some of your questions and concerns. If not, then please contact us at Vermont Value Vet (9873 1113).



**Rabbit Care**

### Vaccinations

All rabbits require course vaccination against Rabbit Calicivirus Disease (RCD). This vaccination is usually given between ten and twelve weeks of age, and an annual booster is given each year for life. The vaccinations take approximately 7-10 days to stimulate a protective immune response. Some rabbits may be sleepy for 24 hours after the vaccination.

### Feeding your rabbit

The basic diet for a rabbit is simple. Rabbits are 80% grass/oaten hay (not lucerne) and 20% leafy vegies (never give iceberg lettuce). A high percentage of fibre also helps control teeth growth. Rabbits groom themselves like cats and therefore develop hairballs – a healthy diet prevents hairballs becoming a problem.

Rabbit fed on high carbohydrate/ low fibre can suffer from a condition called gut stasis. This can also be brought on by stress, lack of exercise and fur ingestion. This causes the gut to stop fermenting food and no faeces are produced. Rabbits suffering from gut stasis will stop eating, become depressed and stop producing faeces. This condition can become serious after just a few hours so if you notice changes in your rabbit you should have him/her checked as soon as possible.

### Parasite control

Rabbits can attract dog fleas, and this can easily be controlled by using flea products such as Revolution. Frontline Plus, on the other hand must never be used on rabbits.

Rabbits can also be affected by fur mites or ear mites. Fur mites usually cause a dandruff type skin condition, especially over the shoulders of the rabbit. It is not normally itchy. Ear mites will cause rabbits to scratch their ears. If you see any of these signs your bunny should be assessed by a vet and appropriate treatment instigated.

Rabbits are not susceptible to heartworm.

### Desexing

If you are not planning to breed from your rabbit, de-sexing is recommended. It ensures a calm temperament and reduces the likelihood of certain diseases. We generally de-sex male and female rabbits from 4 months of age.

### Dental care

Rabbits have teeth that continually grow, and this can lead to overgrown teeth if occlusion problems arise. We often see rabbits with overgrown incisors due to poor diet or hereditary factors. Spurs can also form on the molars, and this can present with excessive drooling and reduced appetite. If you notice any of these symptoms with your rabbit then please bring in for a check up.

### Nails

Rabbits have nails that grow quickly so they need regular trimming.

We hope this information is useful in the care of your rabbit. If you have any concerns or questions please contact Vermont Value Vet (9873 1113) and we will be happy to assist you.

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