



# Caring for Your RABBIT

This care guide from Oxbow Animal Health will teach you everything you need to know about keeping your pet rabbit healthy and happy.



## FEEDING YOUR RABBIT

Your rabbit is a herbivore, which means he eats only plant material.

Grass hay should be the high-fiber cornerstone of every rabbit's diet. The fiber in hay helps meet the important digestive health needs of herbivores such as rabbits. A daily recommended amount of a uniform, fortified food provides essential vitamins and minerals not found in hay. Fresh greens are also an important component of a rabbit's diet, and healthy treats can be beneficial when given in moderation.



## FORTIFIED FOOD

Providing a daily recommended amount of a high-fiber, age-appropriate fortified food will help ensure that your pet receives essential vitamins and minerals not found in hay.



### Pellet Selection

Always choose an age-appropriate pellet formulated specifically for rabbits. Our Essentials Young Rabbit Food is ideal for rabbits under one year of age. For adult rabbits, choose from one of Oxbow's three premium adult rabbit formulas.

## HAY

Your rabbit should have unlimited access to a variety of quality grass hays. Among many benefits, hay helps prevent obesity, dental disease, diarrhea, and boredom. Since replacing the hay in your rabbit's habitat can encourage picky eating, we recommend changing it only when soiled.

Young (less than a year old), pregnant, nursing or ill animals can benefit from eating alfalfa hay in addition to grass hay because of the higher nutritional elements. Otherwise, alfalfa should only be given occasionally as a treat.



### Hay Selection

**Keep in mind:** Grass hay should make up the majority of your pet's daily diet. Offer a variety of hay to your rabbit to promote optimum health. Since hay is a natural product, each bag will look and feel different. Use our Taste & Texture Guide located on every hay package to determine your pet's taste and texture preferences.

We have many all-natural, farm-fresh hays to choose from including *Western Timothy*, *Orchard Grass*, *Oat Hay*, *Botanical Hay*, and *Organic Meadow Hay*. Also, check out our *Harvest Stacks* line of compressed hays for extra enrichment.



### AVOID:

Mixes with nuts, corn, seeds, and fruit because rabbits have a tendency to select those tempting morsels over the healthy pellets



## GREENS

Fresh greens are an important part of your pet's daily diet. Greens contribute to hydration and provide important vitamins and minerals, as well as enrichment. For a complete list of appropriate greens, visit the House Rabbit Society's website at [rabbit.org](http://rabbit.org).

### OFFER:

Romaine, bib, and red leaf lettuce



### AVOID:

Leeks, chives, and onions

## TREATS

Treats (including fruits and veggies) are great for encouraging interaction between you and your pet, but they should only be given after basic daily foods have been eaten. Offering too many treats can cause your rabbit to refuse his healthy, essential foods. It's important to remember that not all treats are created equal! All Oxbow treat varieties are designed to be as wholesome as they are delicious.



## DID YOU KNOW?

Your rabbit's teeth never stop growing. Hay is essential because it stimulates normal chewing and dental wear patterns, helping decrease the risk of dental disease.

## ? DID YOU KNOW?

*With proper nutrition and care, rabbits may live ten or more years.*

## HOUSING YOUR RABBIT

**As animals of prey by nature, all rabbits need a safe place to spend time and escape potential environmental stressors.**

Choose a well-constructed habitat with a solid floor and set it up near household activities, but away from drafts. Your rabbit's habitat should be outfitted with environmental essentials such as a space to hide (Timothy CLUB Bungalow or Tunnel), a litter box lined with litter, some toys, grass hay, a food bowl, and two sources of fresh, clean water.

The confines of a habitat do not allow enough space for a pet's exercise needs. All animals benefit from activity and love to move and explore; a play yard allows you to create a safe, secure, exercise area for your pet.



**Rabbits are INQUISITIVE & CURIOUS by nature.**



## YOUR RABBIT'S HEALTH

**You should visit a qualified exotics veterinarian at least once a year for check-ups on your rabbit's diet, behavior, and health.**

Be prepared for your pet's visits by making a list of any questions or concerns you may have ahead of time. Ask your veterinarian to recommend an appropriate age to have your rabbit spayed or neutered; this will increase the chances of a longer, healthier life for your pet. Many rabbit health problems are preventable with proper diet and care.

### REASONS TO CONTACT YOUR VET:

- Loose, soft, or lack of stool
- Small, dry, or infrequent stools
- Blood in the urine
- Sneezing or trouble breathing
- Hunching in a corner or lack of activity (lethargy)
- Overgrown front teeth
- Observed difficulty with chewing
- Bald patches in the fur
- Sores on the feet
- Abnormal eating or drinking



## RABBIT BEHAVIOR

**Rabbits don't usually like to be picked up or carried.**

The best way to interact with your rabbit is to get down to his level and play with him on the floor. Be sure you are always with your rabbit when he is out for playtime; rabbits are curious by nature and could get into trouble if left alone.

Some rabbit behaviors can seem rather strange. For example, you may see your rabbit eat its own poop. This is a normal, healthy behavior that provides essential vitamins and nutrients.

## SUPPLIES FOR YOUR RABBIT

- Fortified age-specific food:** Oxbow Essentials Young Rabbit Food for rabbits under one year of age or one of Oxbow's three premium formulas for adults
- Two or more varieties of **Oxbow's farm-fresh hays**
- Oxbow treats** for healthy bonding and enrichment
- Water bottle** and heavy **water dish**
- Heavy **food bowl**
- Large play yard** for safe exercise outside the habitat
- Large habitat** with solid, non-slip flooring
- Hiding space** such as Oxbow's Timothy CLUB Bungalow or Tunnel
- Litter box**
- Litter and bedding material** such as Oxbow's Eco-Straw and Pure Comfort Bedding

For more information about rabbit nutrition and behaviors, visit [www.oxbowanimalhealth.com](http://www.oxbowanimalhealth.com).



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