

## PET RABBIT CARE

- Rabbits should be examined by your veterinarian every 6 months. Your veterinarian can teach you how to observe for overgrown teeth and toe nails, sore hocks, discharge from the eyes, ears, nose, skin, and genital areas because these abnormalities may be signs of potentially serious and life-threatening problems. The amount and consistency of bowel movements should also be monitored on a regular basis.
- All rabbits should have hopper feeders, sipper tube waterers, and wire bottom cages, with clean fresh water always available. Bleach should be used at 1 tablespoon per quart of water for disinfections of the cage and utensils.
- Rabbits should be fed a good **FRESH** commercial diet especially formulated for rabbits. Supplements such as quality alfalfa or timothy hay provide fiber and bulk. Fresh, clean vegetables, such as lettuce and carrots, plus Cheerios, granola, oats and oatmeal, though not necessary, can be fed occasionally. Any food changes should be done gradually over a period of two to three weeks to prevent diarrhea and digestive upsets.
- Rabbits are prone to heat stroke. Rabbits should be maintained in temperatures between 40<sup>0</sup>F and 85<sup>0</sup>F. Excessive slobbering or moisture around the mouth or dewlap may be a sign of excessive heat.
- Rabbits are very prone to spinal trauma and subsequent paralysis. Rabbits are generally picked up by the scruff of the neck with one hand with the rear legs supported at all times by the other hand.
- All female rabbits that are not used for breeding should be spayed by 2-3 years of age, as cancer of the uterus is common in the rabbit.
- It is advisable to neuter male rabbits if there are problems with marking territory, urine spraying, and aggressive behavior.



**Southwest Florida Veterinary Services**

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