



Rabbit Care Guide

Introduction

Rabbits are intelligent, social, and gentle animals that make wonderful companions when cared for properly. They require a safe environment, a balanced diet, regular grooming, and plenty of enrichment to stay healthy and happy. This guide provides essential information for responsible rabbit care.



Why Having a Rabbit is a Big Commitment

Owning a rabbit is a rewarding experience, but it comes with substantial responsibilities. Here's why caring for a rabbit is a significant commitment:

1. Time Investment

Rabbits require daily attention and care. From feeding and grooming to providing exercise and social interaction, rabbit care demands a consistent time investment. Unlike some pets that can be more independent, rabbits thrive on routine and companionship, meaning they need dedicated time from their owners every day.

2. Lifespan Consideration

Rabbits can live for 8 to 12 years or more with proper care. Committing to a rabbit means being prepared for a long-term relationship. It's essential to consider whether you can provide a stable environment for them throughout their entire lifespan.

3. Financial Responsibility

Caring for a rabbit involves financial commitments covering food, housing, veterinary care, and enrichment supplies. Regular check-ups, vaccinations, and potential emergencies can add up, so it's crucial to be financially prepared.

4. Space Requirements

Rabbits need ample space to hop, explore, and exercise. They cannot thrive in small cages, so owners must provide an adequate living environment, whether indoors or outdoors. This includes rabbit-proofing areas to ensure their safety and creating a stimulating environment.

5. Health Monitoring

Rabbits are prey animals that often conceal signs of illness, making regular health monitoring an essential part of responsible ownership. Regular health checks and vigilance for changes in behaviour or appetite are necessary to catch potential issues early and ensure prompt veterinary care.

6. Emotional Investment

Rabbits are social creatures that form strong bonds with their owners and other rabbits. They require emotional engagement and thrive when they feel safe and loved. This emotional investment is rewarding but requires understanding and commitment to their social needs.

In summary, while rabbits are delightful and affectionate pets, they require significant dedication and responsibility. Ensuring a rabbit's well-being involves providing a suitable environment, consistent care, and plenty of love. For those ready to commit, the companionship of a rabbit can be incredibly fulfilling.

Housing

- **Indoor Housing:** A large indoor enclosure or pen is recommended for this species. Avoid small cages; rabbits need space to hop, stretch, and explore.

- **Outdoor Housing:** If kept outdoors, provide a secure hutch with weather protection, shade, and predator-proofing. We recommend using a shed or summerhouse as these provide your rabbit with the space they need; however, if you want to keep your rabbit in a hutch, we recommend a 6ft hutch so the rabbit has plenty of room
- **Free Roaming:** Allow supervised free-roaming time indoors or in a secure outdoor run. Rabbit-proof the area by covering wires and removing toxic plants.

Why You Shouldn't House a Rabbit and a Guinea Pig Together

While it may seem like a practical idea to house a rabbit and a guinea pig together due to their similar sizes and dietary needs, there are several reasons why this arrangement is not recommended. Understanding these reasons can help ensure the well-being and happiness of both animals.

Different Social Needs and Behaviours

- **Species-Specific Socialization:** Guinea pigs are highly social animals that thrive in the company of their own kind. They communicate through a wide range of vocalizations and body language that rabbits do not understand. Rabbits are also social but communicate differently, which can lead to misunderstandings and stress between the two species.
- **Different Activity Levels:** Rabbits are generally more active and playful than guinea pigs. Their energetic nature can be overwhelming for guinea pigs, leading to anxiety or injury during play. Guinea pigs prefer a more relaxed environment and may become stressed by a rabbit's vigorous activity.

Health and Safety Concerns

- **Disease Transmission:** Rabbits can carry bacteria called *Bordetella bronchiseptica*, which can cause respiratory infections in guinea pigs. While rabbits often show no symptoms, infection can be severe or even fatal for guinea pigs.
- **Physical Harm:** Even unintentionally, a rabbit's larger size and stronger hind legs can pose a risk to a guinea pig. A playful kick or jump can injure a guinea pig, leading to serious health issues.

Nutritional Differences

- **Dietary Needs:** While both species require hay and vegetables, their specific dietary needs differ. Rabbits need a diet that is higher in fiber and lower in protein compared to guinea pigs. Additionally, guinea pigs require vitamin C in their diet, which rabbits do not. Feeding them together may result in nutritional deficiencies or imbalances.

Alternative Companionship Solutions

- **Same-Species Companions:** It is always best to provide companionship from the same species. Guinea pigs do best with other guinea pigs, and rabbits thrive with other rabbits.

This ensures that their social, dietary, and health needs are appropriately met.

- **Safe Interaction:** If you have both a rabbit and a guinea pig, allow them to interact under supervision in a neutral, safe space but provide them with separate living quarters. This can allow them to enjoy social interaction without the risks associated with cohabitation.

In conclusion, while rabbits and guinea pigs may share some similarities, their differences in social needs, health, and dietary requirements make cohabitation problematic. By respecting each species' unique requirements, you can ensure they live healthy, happy lives.

Diet

- **Hay:** Unlimited fresh hay (such as timothy, orchard grass, or meadow hay) should make up the majority of the diet.
- **Fresh Vegetables:** Offer leafy greens daily (e.g., romaine lettuce, kale, parsley, cilantro). Introduce new vegetables gradually.
- **Pellets:** Provide a small portion of high-quality rabbit pellets (about 1/4 cup per 2 kg of body weight daily).
- **Fresh Water:** Ensure constant access to clean water in a bowl or bottle.
- **Treats:** Limit fruits and commercial treats to occasional small portions.

Grooming

- **Brushing:** Regular brushing prevents matting and reduces hair ingestion, especially during shedding seasons.
- **Nail Trimming:** Trim nails every 4–6 weeks to prevent overgrowth.
- **Dental Care:** Provide chew toys and hay to keep teeth worn down naturally.

Health

- **Veterinary Care:** Schedule annual check-ups with a rabbit-savvy veterinarian.
- **Spaying/Neutering:** Recommended to prevent health issues and reduce unwanted behaviors.
- **Signs of Illness:** Watch for changes in appetite, droppings, or behavior. Seek immediate veterinary care if a rabbit stops eating or pooping.

Enrichment

- **Toys:** Provide chew toys, tunnels, cardboard boxes, and safe wooden blocks.
- **Exercise:** Rabbits need several hours of daily exercise outside their enclosure.
- **Social Interaction:** Rabbits are social animals and thrive with companionship, either from humans or another rabbit.

Safety

- **Rabbit-Proofing:** Cover electrical cords, block off unsafe areas, and remove toxic plants.
- **Handling:** Support the rabbit's body securely; never pick up by the ears.
- **Environment:** Keep rabbits in a calm, quiet space away from extreme temperatures and loud noises.

Conclusion

Caring for a rabbit requires commitment, patience, and attention to detail. With proper housing, nutrition, grooming, and enrichment, rabbits can live healthy, happy lives for 8–12 years or more. Providing a safe and loving environment ensures a strong bond and a rewarding companionship.

on the next page is the list of fruit and veggies rabbits can eat



Veggies For Rabbits



Absolutely! 🐰 That's a great idea—many people don't realize that rabbits have sensitive digestive systems, so knowing what's safe (and what's not) is super important. Here's a clear breakdown you could share:

🐰 Safe Fruits & Veggies for Rabbits

(Always introduce new foods slowly and in small amounts!)

Veggies (best choices):

- Romaine lettuce (avoid iceberg)
- Kale (in moderation)
- Spinach (in moderation)
- Carrot tops
- Carrots (in moderation high in sugar)
- Cilantro
- Parsley
- Basil
- Mint
- Bok choy
- Zucchini
- Bell peppers
- Broccoli leaves & stems (small amounts)
- Cucumber

Fruits (as occasional treats):

- Apples (no seeds)
- Bananas (tiny slices only)
- Strawberries
- Blueberries
- Raspberries
- Pears (no seeds)
- Pineapple (small chunks)
- Mango
- Melon

🚫 Foods Rabbits Should NOT Eat

- Iceberg lettuce (can cause digestive issues)
- Potatoes (including sweet potatoes)
- Onions, garlic, leeks, chives
- Rhubarb
- Avocado (toxic)
- Tomato leaves or stems (fruit is okay in very small amounts)
- Corn (hard to digest)
- Beans or peas (cause gas)
- Seeds, pits, or nuts
- Chocolate, bread, crackers, or processed foods

👉 A good rule of thumb: **Hay should make up 80–90% of a rabbit's diet**, with fresh veggies daily and fruit only as a treat.

Would you like me to turn this into a **cute Canva infographic** you can share with others (like a “Yes & No Foods for Rabbits” chart)?

