

Brant County SPCA

Rabbits



Q: *Why Adopt a Rabbit?*

A: Rabbits are intelligent, social animals that need affection, and can become wonderful companion animals if given a chance to interact with their human families.

Q: *What should I know before adopting a Rabbit?*

A: Many rabbits found at a shelter have come from many diverse backgrounds. Some may be timid as a result of not being handled and socialized so being patient with them and taking it slow is important as it takes time for them to come out of their shell. But for most of the rabbits for adoption they are just looking for human companionship.

Q: *What is the lifespan of a Rabbit?*

A: The average lifespan of a spayed/neutered rabbit is 6 – 10 years and even longer.

Q: *Where should I keep my Rabbit?*

A: In a cage that is **at least** 4X the size of your rabbit and has room for a litter box, food and water, toys and space to hop around. You can also use a dog crate with a plastic base, but they are not the easiest to clean. Also, if your rabbit is litter trained, he can live in a rabbit proofed room.

Q: *What type of cage is best for my Rabbit?*

A: Rabbits were not designed to live on wire floors—they are hard on their feet (which do not have pads on them, like cats or dogs). Rabbits should be in a cage with slatted plastic floors, which are more comfortable, or you can use a solid floor. As long as your rabbit has a litter box in the corner that he chooses as his bathroom there should not be much of a mess to clean up. If you must use a cage with a wire floor, you need to provide your rabbit with a resting board or rug for her to sit on; otherwise, she will spend all of her time in her litter box.

Q: *How do I litter train my Rabbit?*

A: Start with a box in the cage. If she urinates in a corner of the cage not containing the box, move the box to that corner until she gets it right. Once she is using the box in the cage, open her door and allow her into her running space. Watch her go in and out on her own. If she heads to a corner where there is no box, or lifts up her tail in the characteristic fashion, cry “no” in a single, sharp burst of sound. Gently herd her back to her cage and her litter box. Be careful, however. You do not want to make the cage or the litter box seem like punishment. A handful of hay in the box makes it a more welcoming place. After she first used the box, praise her and give her a favorite treat.

Q: *What are the basics of a Rabbits diet?*

A: A rabbit’s diet should be made up of good quality pellets, fresh grass hay (timothy or oat), water and fresh vegetables. Alfalfa hay should only be given in small quantities, as it is too rich in protein and calcium for the rabbit to consume on a regular basis. Anything beyond that is a “treat” and should be given in limited quantities.

Q: *Is feeding hay important?*

A: Hay is essential to a rabbit’s good health, providing roughage, which reduces the danger of hairballs and other blockages. Apple tree twigs also provide good roughage.

Q: *What kind of veggies should I feed my Rabbit?*

A: When shopping for vegetables, look for a selection of different veggies—look for both dark leafy veggies and root vegetables, and try to get different

colors. Stay away from beans and rhubarb. Select at least three kinds of vegetables daily. A variety is necessary in order to obtain the necessary nutrients, with one each day that contains Vitamin A. Add one vegetable to the diet at a time. Eliminate if it causes soft stools or diarrhea.

Some fruit, vegetables and herbs that are safe to feed a rabbit are listed below:

• Apples (seedless)	• Kale
• Asparagus	• Mint
• Banana	• Orange (peeled)
• Basil	• Oregano
• Brussel Sprouts	• Parsley
• Cabbage	• Red Leaf Lettuce
• Carrots and Carrot tops	• Red Cabbage
• Chicory Greens	• Romaine Lettuce
• Cucumber	• Savoy Cabbage
• Dill	• Spinach
• Endive	• Tomato
• Fennel	• Turnip Greens
• Grapes	• Watercress
• Green Pepper	

Vegetables and herbs that should **NOT** be fed are:

- Apple seeds
- Potato and Potato Tops
- Rhubarb and Rhubarb Leaves
- Tomato Leaves

Q: *Why should I spay or neuter my Rabbit?*

A: Altered rabbits are healthier and live longer than unaltered rabbits. As well, altered rabbits make better companions. They are calmer, more loving, and dependable once the undeniable urge to mate has been removed. It also helps to keep the overwhelming population of rabbits down.

Q: *What kind of hazards around my house should I be aware of?*

A: Cords, wires and houseplants!!

Q: What can I do to prevent them from chewing things that can hurt them?

A: Place a protective cover over any cords or wires. For example, use PVC piping to keep them hidden and safe or raise the cords or wires off the ground so your rabbit cannot reach them. As for houseplants, move them out of reach areas.

Q: Does my Rabbit need to be groomed?

A: YES! Rabbits can act as if they're hardy creatures, but they are, in fact, extremely delicate-from their skin to their spines to their external systems. Care must be taken to maintain their good health.

Q: Is Daily Exercise Important?

A: YES! Although Rabbits are kept safe in cages when they are not supervised it is very important that they are able to get daily exercise out of their cage. Rabbits love to run and hop and most cages do not allow them to do this to the extent they require on a daily basis. You can purchase playpens that Rabbits can be set up in and they can be kept safe while at the same time getting the exercise they require.

THINKING ABOUT ADOPTING A BUNNY VISIT YOUR LOCAL SHELTER TODAY.