

# NUTRITION

## GRASS HAYS

Unlimited – timothy, orchard, meadow, oat, coastal bermuda

## VEGETABLES

One packed cup per two pounds of body weight per day, see list below

## PELLETS

Follow instructions on the bag, based on body weight.

No seeds or treats mixed with pellets

## TREATS

1-2 pieces per day

NO seeds, cereals, or other processed human foods

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## WATER

Drinking from a large bowl is more natural. Rabbits drink a lot of water for their size. Large ceramic dog bowls work best and are hard to tip or throw around.

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## Leafy Greens I

Leafy Greens I – rotate due to oxalic acid content, only one should be from this list each day

Parsley  
Spinach

Mustard Greens  
Beet Greens

Swiss Chard  
Radish Tops

## Leafy Greens II

Leafy Greens II – low in oxalic acid

Arugula  
Carrot tops  
Endive  
Kale (all types)

Green Leaf Lettuce  
Red Leaf Lettuce  
Romaine Lettuce  
Fennel

Spring Greens  
Turnip Greens  
Dandelion Greens  
Mint

Basil  
Cilantro  
Radicchio  
Dill

## Non-leafy

Non-leafy vegetables – no more than about 15% of the diet, about 1 tbsp per 2 lbs of body weight per day

Carrots  
Broccoli

Celery  
Bell peppers

Broccolini  
Cabbage

Summer Squash  
Zucchini Squash

# HOUSING

## Minimum Requirements

8 square feet for singles and small breeds.

10 square feet for pairs and large breeds.

Solid flooring – no wire bottom floors.

Indoors Only – Preferred 60–75 degrees.

Room to move, sleep and play.

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## Enclosures Options

### Exercise Pen

- Recommended at least 35" tall.
- Provides 16 square feet of living space.
- Flooring should be added to protect hardwood floors and carpeting.
- \$50+ plus cost of flooring.
- Tops are available for purchase.

### Dog Crate

- Recommended large or extra large.
  - Provides 8–10 square feet of living space.
  - Shelf can be added for more space.
  - Completely enclosed and can be locked.
  - Starting at \$60 for large crates.
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## What to include in your enclosure:

- Litter box
  - Food and water bowls
  - Fleece blanket
  - Cardboard box for hiding and playing
  - Toys
  - Room to move and sleep
- 

## Bunny Proofing

Cover or block all electrical cords.

Under the bed and couch are favorite destruction zones.

Ceramic tiles to stop carpet digging in corners.

Wood chewing – furniture, baseboards, and even walls.

Shoes, clothes, remotes, books, and other items left on the floor may be chewed.

Many common house plants are toxic.

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# LITTER TRAINING

## Litter Box Training Tips

- Rectangular cat litter boxes work great for rabbits, the bigger the better!
- Avoid triangular litter boxes marketed for small animals.
- Place the litter box in a corner, or multiple corners.
- Add lots of hay to one side of the litter box, or add a hay rack over the box.
- Change litter every 1-3 days as needed. Cleaning regularly will help with smell and make your rabbit happy!
- Use distilled white vinegar to clean litter boxes and pee accidents.
- Litter boxes with grids are great for diggers.
- Add two or more little boxes if your rabbit is still learning.
- If your rabbit is urinating over the edge try a box with higher sides, but make sure your rabbit can jump in and out easily.

## Safe Litter Options

Pelleted Pine – Feline Pine & Equine Pine, Unscented

Pelleted Paper – SoPhresh, Oxbow & Eco Bedding

Shredded Paper – Carefresh, Critter Care & Oxbow

Pelleted Straw – Critter Country & EcoStraw

Aspen Shavings

Newspaper

## DO NOT USE

Pine Shavings  
Cedar Shavings  
Clay Litter

Wheat Litter  
Corn Cob Litter  
Scented Litter

# ENRICHMENT

## 2-4 hours outside of the enclosure daily

### Toys

- Inside the enclosure provide rabbit safe items for chewing, tossing and foraging.
- Plastic toys should only be given when supervised.
- Monitor your rabbit when playing, make sure blankets with holes are removed, watch for toys they can get stuck around their bodies or on their head.
- Logic toys are a fun way to work their minds and encourage foraging.
- Sticks and branches are great for chewing; Make sure they are pesticide free and safe for rabbits; Many are available for purchase from pet stores.

### Easy DIY Ideas

- Stuff hay in toilet paper or paper towel rolls (make sure there is very little glue on the cardboard).
- Cut a cardboard box into a hide and destroy box (plain brown boxes, no waxy coating).
- Stuff brown packing paper in boxes or between enclosure bars.

### Safe Outdoor Play

- Rabbits should be closely monitored at all times while outdoors.
- Rabbits should be protected from predators, including birds of prey.
- It is recommended rabbits be vaccinated against RHDV2 before playing outdoors.
- Monitor temperatures, rabbits overheat easily.
- Warmer months bring out mites, botflies, fleas and ticks; Talk to your vet about safe preventative treatment; Many flea treatments are toxic to rabbits, always consult your vet!

### Bonding Rabbits

- Many, but not all, rabbits enjoy having a rabbit friend. Bonding rabbits can take time and patience. While rabbits are social, they can also be very territorial. It is best to research bonding techniques and seek advice from Triangle Rabbits or other rabbit rescues before starting.
- Rabbits should both be spayed/neutered before attempting to bond.
- Male/female and male/male bonding is usually the easiest.

# HANDLING



Most rabbits do not enjoy being held or carried. As prey their instinct will be to get away.

Nail trims, vet visits and emergencies are times when you will need to pick up your rabbit.

Sitting on the floor with a rabbit and letting them come to you is a great way to build trust. Don't follow them if they hop away. Let them decide if they've had enough interaction.

Treats and positive reinforcement are a great way to build a great relationship, built on trust.

## How to pick up your rabbit:

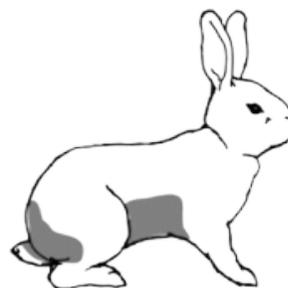
- Place one hand under their chest.
- The other hand will support their hind legs and back.
- Lift swiftly and securely hold them against your body.
- Never pick up by their ears or scruff.

## Did you know?

Rabbits can see all around them, but there is a small blind spot in front of their nose. Most of us are used to approaching animal's noses for an introduction, but that can make some rabbits nervous. It is best to approach from overhead.



*Preferred areas for stroking/grooming.*



*Areas to acclimatise rabbits to touching for picking up.*

# HEALTH

## Grooming

- Rabbits do NOT need baths.
- Pet and brush your rabbit to remove excess hair.
- Rabbits shed four times a year.
- Rabbits have delicate skin; do not yank or pull on knots and consult your vet for extra grooming if needed.
- Trim nails every 6–8 weeks.

## Spay/Neuter

- All rabbits should be spayed or neutered, even when living as a single rabbit.
- Unspayed females have a high risk of uterine cancer.
- Not all vets can spay or neuter rabbits; Look for an exotic vet in your area.
- Spaying and neutering can solve many behavior problems and improve litter box habits.

## RHDV2

- RHDV2 is highly contagious and deadly disease that affects both wild and domestic rabbits.
- RHDV2 is not contagious to humans or other animals, but both can transmit the virus after contact with contaminated objects, animals, insects, or feces.
- All rabbits are a risk, even if only kept indoors.
- The virus causes death within 3–5 days, often without symptoms.
- Vaccination is recommended, consult your exotic vet to schedule or find a vaccine near you.

## Common Health Issues

- Ear mites, fleas, and ticks
- Diarrhea with listlessness
- Loss of appetite
- Labored breathing
- Sneezing and runny nose
- Loss of balance, rolling, or head tilt
- Incontinence (urine-soaked rear legs)
- Abscesses, lumps or swellings
- GI Stasis – not eating, drinking, or pooping
- Consult your vet at the first sign of illness

## Vet Care

Young rabbits should have yearly physicals with an exotic vet.  
Older rabbits or those with special needs may need more frequent check ups.  
Call your vet or emergency clinic when any signs of illness are present.

## Did you know?

Rabbits are considered exotic pets and not all vets can treat your pet rabbit? Go to [trianglerabbit.org](http://trianglerabbit.org) to find a list of exotic vets in North Carolina. Don't see your location? Contact us and we will try to locate the nearest exotic vet.

# BEHAVIOR

## A happy rabbit

These rabbits are relaxed and happy.

Rabbits 1-3 show ears close together, facing slightly backwards and pointing outwards. Eyes may be partially closed.

1



Rabbit is lying down, with a relaxed body posture and legs tucked under the body.

2



Rabbit is lying down, with front paws pointing forward and rear legs stuck out sideways. Body is relaxed and extended.

3



Rabbit is lying down with a fully extended, relaxed body. Back legs are stretched out behind the body and the front paws are pointing forward.

4



Rabbit jumps into the air with all four paws off the ground and twists in mid-air before landing.

## A worried rabbit

These rabbits are telling you that they are uncomfortable and don't want you near them.

1

Rabbit is in a crouched position, muscles are tense, head held flat to the ground, ears wide apart and flattened against the back, pupils dilated.



2

Rabbits who are worried or anxious may hide.



## An angry or very unhappy rabbit

These rabbits are not happy and want you to stay away or go away.

1



Rabbit turns and moves away flicking the back feet. Ears may be held against the back.

2

Rabbit is sitting up on back legs with front paws raised displaying boxing behaviour. Ears pointed upwards and facing outwards, rabbit may be growling.



3

Rabbit is standing tense, with back legs thumping on the ground. Tail raised, ears pointing upwards and slightly turned outwards, facial muscles are tense and pupils dilated.



4

Rabbit is standing tense with body down and weight towards the back, head tilted upwards, mouth open and teeth visible. Ears held back and lowered, tail raised, pupils dilated.



Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

Wilberforce Way, Southwater, Horsham, West Sussex RH13 9RS

www.rspca.org.uk facebook.com/RSPCA twitter.com/RSPCA\_official

The RSPCA helps animals in England and Wales. Registered charity no: 219099 The RSPCA only exists with the support of public donations.

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# RESOURCES

## General Information

Triangle Rabbits - <https://www.trianglerabbits.org/>

My House Rabbit - <https://myhouserabbit.com/>

101 Rabbits - <https://www.youtube.com/c/101rabbits>

The Bunny Lady - <https://bunnylady.com/>

How Cast Videos with Amy Sedaris & Mary Cotter -  
<https://www.howcast.com/guides/1187-how-to-take-care-of-a-pet-rabbit>

## Bonding

Binky Bunny - <https://binkybunny.com/infocategory/bonding/>

Los Angeles House Rabbit Society - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M7O7Trnp2lo>

## Toys and Enrichment

Pinterest - <https://www.pinterest.com/TriangleRabbit/diy-toys-and-enrichment/>

Triangle Rabbits Online Store - <https://triangle-rabbits.square.site/>



# RABBITS & RHDV2

## - WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW -

**Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease (RHD)** is a highly contagious and deadly disease caused by a calicivirus that affects both wild and domestic rabbits. It's not contagious to people or other animals. Rabbit hemorrhagic disease virus 2 (RHDV2) causes deaths in wild rabbits and hares native to North America and has spread throughout the United States, Mexico, and parts of Canada.

The virus is shed in urine, feces, and secretions from eyes, nose, and mouth, and remains present in fur and internal organs and tissues. The virus infects rabbits through the mucous membranes of their eyes, noses, and mouths. Sick rabbits and insects typically transmit the virus. While RHD only affects rabbits, the disease can be transmitted by people or animals through contact with contaminated objects, animals, insects, or feces. **Even if your rabbit is kept inside, they are still at risk of becoming infected with RHD.**

The virus causes death within 3-5 days of exposure, often with no symptoms. A sudden rabbit death is suspicious and should be reported to your veterinarian as a possible RHD case. Report sightings of sick and/or dead wild rabbits to your state wildlife officials; **do not touch them.**

## PROTECTING YOUR RABBIT FROM RHD

- ▶ Keep your rabbit indoors with no outdoor playtime and no playtime with other rabbits from outside your home.
- ▶ Wash your hands thoroughly before and after handling rabbits.
- ▶ After contact with other rabbits, change your clothes and wash them.
- ▶ Leave shoes outside your home.
- ▶ Disinfect objects that may be contaminated. Visit [rabbit.org/rhdv](http://rabbit.org/rhdv) for a list of disinfectants that effectively kill the virus that causes RHD.
- ▶ Keep mosquitos and flies out of your home with window and door screens.
- ▶ Know your sources of hay, feed, and greens, and avoid if located in areas where RHD is spreading among wild rabbits who may be carrying the virus.
- ▶ Quarantine any new rabbit for at least 14 days.
- ▶ Multi-pet households should take additional precautions to protect their rabbit, as the virus can be spread to a healthy, indoor-only rabbit by cats and dogs who go outside. **(see reverse)**
- ▶ Learn how to trim your rabbit's nails and groom them at home, not taking them to higher-risk locations like a rescue or vet's office.
- ▶ Use a monthly flea treatment for rabbits, cats, and dogs. Advantage II and Revolution are safe to use on rabbits. Never use Frontline. Visit [rabbit.org/faq-grooming](http://rabbit.org/faq-grooming) to learn more.



# GETTING YOUR RABBIT **VACCINATED**

Regular vaccination is required for continuous protection against RHD. Vaccination is low risk and is effective for the vast majority of rabbits. A small number of rabbits may become infected with rabbit hemorrhagic disease virus (RHDV) without showing symptoms at all; this is called an "asymptomatic infection." Another very small group of vaccinated rabbits may develop mild symptoms and recover. This means biosecurity measures should still be implemented depending on your region and vaccination status of your rabbits.

Currently, a vaccine that protects against RHD is available in most states in the United States. Medgene Labs manufactures this vaccine and supplies veterinarians in states where the vaccine has been approved for distribution. The vaccine has been given emergency use authorization and further studies are needed to determine how often the vaccine needs to be administered, but at this time it is believed that it will be annually. Contact your veterinarian about the vaccine's availability and visit [rabbit.org/faq-for-medgenes-rhdv2-vaccine](http://rabbit.org/faq-for-medgenes-rhdv2-vaccine) for more information.

## **MULTI-PET** HOUSEHOLDS

Those who live with non-rabbit companion animals may need to take additional biosecurity measures to protect their rabbits from RHD, as pets who roam outdoors and are then allowed inside may transmit the virus that causes RHD to your companion rabbit.

We recommend using a monthly flea treatment for rabbits, cats, and dogs, especially in regions where RHD affects wild and feral rabbits. Advantage II and Revolution flea and tick treatments are safe for use in rabbits. **Never use Frontline on a rabbit.** Keep all household pets away from all wild, feral, and unfamiliar rabbits — for example, do not feed cats or dogs rabbit meat — the meat could harbor RHDV and could be spread to your rabbit when your cat or dog licks your rabbit or drinks from their water bowl. We recommend keeping cats and dogs indoors whenever possible to reduce the risk that they could bring RHDV into your home. Leashing dogs during walks can also reduce the risk that the dog comes into contact with wild or feral rabbits. You might also consider washing your dog's feet or training them to wear booties outdoors. Keeping your rabbit's play and living spaces separate from your dogs and/or cats may also reduce the chance the rabbit comes into contact with virus tracked into your house from outside.

## **LEARN MORE** ABOUT RHD

House Rabbit Society continually updates [rabbit.org/rhdv](http://rabbit.org/rhdv) with the best information about RHD and protecting your rabbit from this deadly disease. Subscribe to our newsletter at [rabbit.org/signup](http://rabbit.org/signup) to ensure that you receive timely alerts about RHD.

