

# PURCHASING YOUR FIRST PET RABBIT FACT SHEET

Rabbits are known for their gentle and affectionate nature. They can form strong bonds with their owners and enjoy being petted and cuddled, making them the perfect affectionate companion.

## Handy Checklist

This checklist covers all the basics to help you set up a safe and enriching home for your bunny.

- Housing:** A secure, well-ventilated hutch provides your rabbit with a safe and comfortable space to live.
- Bedding:** Use straw or pet hay for warmth, comfort, and to support natural nesting behaviour.
- Nutrition Support:** Include a vitamin and mineral supplement to ensure balanced nutrition, especially for young or growing rabbits.
- Minerals:** Provide a salt lick stone to support hydration and mineral intake.
- Grooming & Health:** Use rabbit-safe shampoo, a wormer, and a small animal lice and mite spray as part of their regular care routine.
- Enrichment:** Rabbits are smart and playful – offer at least one toy to keep them mentally stimulated and prevent boredom.
- Exercise:** An appropriately sized exercise wheel helps keep them physically active.
- Feeding Supplies:** Use a sturdy food bowl and a clean water bottle to ensure constant access to food and water.
- Toileting:** A litter tray with rabbit-safe litter helps keep their space tidy and encourages good hygiene habits.
- Cleaning:** Use a hutch cleaning spray regularly to maintain a clean and healthy living environment.



**DID YOU KNOW?**

### Binkies = pure joy!

When rabbits are super happy, they do a playful leap with a twist in mid-air called a binky. It's their way of saying, "Life is great!"





## Arriving Home

Your new rabbit is likely to be nervous.

For the first few days make sure you talk to him regularly before introducing your hand into the cage or stroking him.

When he is used to this you can then pick him up. Use both hands, one under the chest with the rabbit's front legs on either side of your fingers, the other resting on his neck and back.

Hold him close to your body so he feels safe and wont fall.

Once they are used to you, rabbits love being handled.

## Bedding

Rabbits can be kept outdoors all year round or indoors if you prefer. If kept outside, they should be kept in a weatherproof hutch that is raised off the ground and away from the wind.

A rabbit hutch should be at least 122cm x 61cm x 61cm with a separate living area and run.

In the warmer months you can place the rabbit's hutch onto your lawn. However, you must

move it frequently to prevent overgrazing and ensure the hutch is not in direct sunlight.

Wood shavings, breeder's choice litter, straw or hay should be used as substrate on the floor of the hutch. You should remove all substrate weekly and thoroughly clean the hutch using hutch clean spray.

If you have more than one rabbit you will need to clean the hutch at least twice a week. Your rabbit will choose one area in its hutch as a toilet spot. Once this spot has been determined you can place his litter tray with litter there.

Place some of your rabbit's droppings into the litter tray so he knows this is still his toilet area.

Clean the litter tray each day. For the first few times after cleaning the litter tray you should still put some of his droppings in there until your rabbit is used to the litter tray.

We recommend using the small animal corner litter trays. They have been designed to fit into the hutch without using up too much of the rabbits space.

## Feeding

We recommend feeding your rabbit a rabbit and guinea pig mix along with fresh fruit and vegetables.

You will need to add a vitamin

and mineral supplement to your rabbit's water as rabbits cannot produce their own vitamin C.

Your rabbit can eat apples, pears, carrots, broccoli, cauliflower leaves, celery (in small amounts) lettuce (in small amounts), Corn on the cob, silver beet, spinach and milk thistle. Occasionally you can treat your rabbit with bread but not too much as the yeast can be harmful in large quantities. Remember to remove any uneaten fruit or vegetables daily to prevent your rabbit from getting ill from eating soiled food.

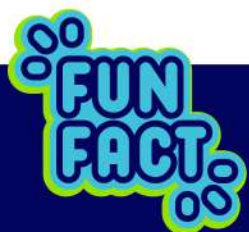
We recommend using a ceramic dish for your rabbit's, food as they are easy to keep clean and are too heavy for your rabbit to tip over.

Your rabbit will graze constantly during the day, if you notice that the rabbit and guinea pig mix has been finished each day then you will need to increase the amount that you are feeding your rabbit.

## Worming

Your rabbit will require worming every three months just like cats and dogs. The small animal wormer can be given to your rabbit by mixing it with their water or by drops directly to the mouth. Always follow the instructions on the bottle.

If left-untreated worms can make your rabbit quite ill with, diarrhea, weight loss, dry skin and a dull coat.



Their ears do more than hear – Rabbit ears help regulate body temperature. Some can even swivel 270 degrees to pinpoint sounds.





### Grooming

You should start grooming your rabbit from an early age so they become used to the feeling.

We recommend regular brushing with a slicker or bristle brush. You can wash your rabbit using small animal shampoo or a dry shampoo in the colder months.

Once a month you need to spray your rabbit and hutch with small animal mite & lice spray to prevent or treat against mites and lice.

### Breeding

Rabbits are prolific breeders! Females can start breeding from 1 month of age. The gestation period is between 28 - 31 days, with the average litter size of 3-4 babies.

Make sure you remove the male, as the female can become pregnant again within an hour of giving birth!

When planning to breed your rabbit you will need to increase the amount of calcium in her diet before and during pregnancy and make sure you have wormed her prior to breeding.

If you are not planning to breed your rabbit you can have the male

de-sexed to prevent any accidents, or you can keep two rabbits of the same sex together even two males as long as they are introduced together from a young age.

Rabbits are extremely sociable animals you should avoid keeping them on their own.

### Toys

Believe it or not toys play a vital role in the rabbits life as they do for many other animals. Rabbits enjoy new things to explore and play with.

Other than relieving boredom toys are also important to keep their teeth in perfect condition.

Rabbits will even enjoy having a good chew on sticks, coco chunks and even dental chews.

### Fit and healthy rabbits

A healthy rabbit will be alert with bright clear eyes, dry nostrils and a clean and shiny coat. The droppings should be small, firm pellets.

Signs of illness are a dull, dirty coat, loss of appetite, skin sores, loose droppings, or a runny nose.

Poor hygiene is a common cause of illness. If these symptoms are present you should consult your vet.

### Clubs and shows

If you want to have even more fun with your rabbit you can get involved with your local rabbit club and join in with activities

and shows. You can find the rabbit clubs listed under clubs in your local phone book or via the internet.

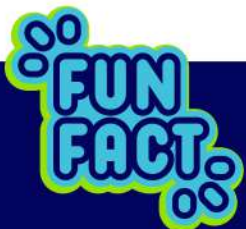
There are also rat clubs listed online! These clubs' members have a lot of knowledge to share and you can also join in the fun with their activities.



### Further Information

There are many different breeds and colours of rabbits.

You can get all the info via the many books written on rabbits, attending the shows or by searching the internet.



A healthy bunny can live 8-12 years – They're a long-term commitment full of snuggles, mischief, and love.