



# All Creatures Animal Hospital

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## **Rabbits As Pets**

**Average Lifespan: 5-10 years**

### **Diet**

- Rabbit food will provide essential nutrients and high fiber.
- Grass hay must be available at all times.
- Fresh fruits and vegetables can supplement your rabbit's diet.

### **Grooming/Bathing**

- Oatmeal shampoo can be used when needed.
- Nails must be trimmed regularly.

### **Spay/Neuter**

- Strongly suggested to prevent cancer. Uterine cancer occurs in 60% of unsprayed rabbits.
- Behavioral issues can be prevented such as being harder to handle, territorial, aggressive and/or spraying urine.
- It is harder to litter box train an unsprayed/unneutered rabbit.

### **Housing Recommendations**

- Use caging with a solid bottom so your pet does not get caught in metal grating
- Places to hide must be provided for comfort.
- Paper or aspen bedding can be used (avoid cedar and pine).
- Rabbits can be trained to use a litter box with organic or paper litter.
- Rabbits do better in cooler climates so discuss outdoor housing with a veterinarian.

### **Annual Exam Recommendations**

- This time spent with our exotic veterinarian allows us to form a preventative plan for your pet. We can analyze your current husbandry and make suggestions.
- Fecal examinations check for internal parasites.
- Rabbits can contract fleas and ear mites so these external parasites must be checked for as well.
- Physical examinations by our veterinarian check for any abnormalities.
- Teeth must be checked for dental disease at each exam.

### **Senior Screening**

- Blood work is required to check the functioning of your older rabbit's organ systems and check for cancer

### **Common Medical Conditions**

- Dental disease is common as teeth constantly grow. Watch for loss of appetite and increased drooling.
- Heat stroke can occur if kept in rooms above 80°F. Panting, lethargy and high body temperature are signs to watch for.
- Bladder stones can occur with signs of straining to urinate and/or blood in the urine.
- Enteritis causes GI dysfunction with loss of appetite, diarrhea, and/or lethargy.
- *Pasteurella* is a bacterial infection common to rabbits with symptoms of eye and nasal discharge, squinting, and sneezing.
- “Sore hocks” are unique to rabbits. Due to constantly sitting on their back legs, rabbits are at risk for this condition in wire caging with not enough support. Hair loss, inflammation, and abscesses occur on these back leg joints.