

RABBIT POST SURGICAL CARE

Your new pet rabbit has just been spayed (female) or neutered (male). Please follow the guidelines below to ensure that your pet recovers smoothly as they adjust to their new environment.

When you return home:

- Keep your rabbit in a confined quiet area away from other pets and children for several days to allow adequate rest which is essential for healing.
- Rabbits may be offered food as soon as they show interest. Fresh food and water should be always available.
- A small amount of blood around the incision is normal immediately after surgery. You will not see any sutures since they are absorbable, only surgical glue, which provides protection for the incision.
- Your rabbit had eye ointment placed in its eyes for protection during surgery. This may make the eyes look glazed or weepy. The ointment will absorb naturally.
- Females spayed at OC Animal Care are tattooed at the incision. This appears as a black mark that eventually turns into a green line allowing easy identification that the rabbit has already been surgically sterilized.
- The presence of blood in the urine 24-48 hours after surgery may be observed.

Over the next 7 days:

- **Check your rabbit's incision daily.** What the incision looks like today is what we consider normal. If you notice dehiscence (incision opens), excessive redness, swelling or discharge at the incision site, give us a call.
- If your rabbit starts licking or chewing at the incision, an e-collar should be purchased at a local pet store and immediately placed on the rabbit.
- Keep male and female rabbits separated for at least 2 weeks after surgery. They may try to breed for several weeks after surgery and neutered males can still have living sperm in ducts within the spermatic cord.
- **Do not bathe or get your rabbit wet for 7-10 days.**
- Do not pick female rabbits up for at least 4 days after surgery. Trying to pick up a female too soon after surgery may result in her biting or scratching out of pain.
- Make sure your rabbit's eating returns to normal over the next 2-3 days. Some rabbits have soft or clumped stool for a couple days. Offering good quality hay will usually help get your rabbit eating and defecating.

Please contact the OC Animal Care Veterinary Clinic (714) 935-6848 if you have any questions or concerns. All financial expenses incurred after adoption are the sole responsibility of the new pet owner.





RABBIT CARE

A rabbit is a more delicate pet to own as compared to a dog or cat and requires more maintenance. Many hygiene-related problems and diseases can be related to your rabbit's housing environment. Poor housing may lead to arthritis, boredom and depression in your rabbit. Before owning a rabbit, be sure you are committed to provide adequate housing and daily maintenance required by your pet rabbit.

Housing

Rabbits can be housed indoors or outdoors. Make sure you "rabbit proof" your home when left to exercise indoors. They will chew on wires and house plants. Providing toys to chew on is a good type of environmental enrichment. Safe chew toys include cardboard boxes, an old telephone directory, paper towel or toilet paper rolls stuffed with hay and commercial made chew sticks. Outdoor rabbits should be housed in properly constructed hutches (off the ground with all sides enclosed) that provide shade and shelter from the wind and temperature extremes. A strong continuous barrier such as wire mesh on all outdoor cages is vital to protect your rabbit from predator attacks.

The cage size should be no less than 4 times in length and 2 times in width the size of your adult rabbit. The minimum recommended cage size for one rabbit is 2 ft by 4 ft and should be tall enough to allow the rabbit to stand on its hind feet. The cage should be even larger for rabbits confined for long periods of time.

Never house a rabbit in a glass aquarium. They are poorly ventilated and potentially dangerous.

Avoid cages with wire flooring which can ulcerate a rabbit's foot. If wire flooring is necessary, provide a solid surface for the rabbit to rest on that can be easily disinfected. Bedding should be provided in the cage. The most appropriate types of bedding include washable blankets or towels and clean straw. Rabbits seek hiding places when frightened and should have a hiding box in the cage. Rabbits deposit urine and feces in the same place of the cage each time, so a litter box should be placed in this spot. Put shredded newspaper and/or bunny safe organic litter such as Carefresh, Yesterday's News or Cat Country on the bottom of the litter box and cover it with lots of fresh hay since rabbits like to graze and poop at the same time. Never use cat litter or cedar/pine shavings for litter as these can cause respiratory problems.

Cage Cleaning

On a daily basis, clean spills, wash bottles and bowls with warm soapy water, replace stale food, remove shedding hair and urine/feces from the cage. Change the litter box daily and replace with fresh litter. Once a week, remove your rabbit from the cage and perform a thorough cleaning. Wash litter pans, space boards and bedding.

Handling

It is very important to support your rabbit's hindquarters when picked up. If you are unsure about the correct handling of a rabbit, please consult a rabbit veterinarian. Rabbits like to be carried with their rear end tucked into the crook of your arm while always supporting them from above and below. Rabbits have a very fragile backbone and very powerful rear legs and may easily injure their backs if they jump from a high place or struggle vigorously. Never pick up a rabbit by the ears or scruff as this can cause serious injury. Rabbits may scratch and bite, so proper handling and supervision are essential.

Diet

A rabbit's diet should be made up of unlimited grass type hay, fresh vegetables and limited pellets. It is recommended to split the pellet and vegetable rations into two feedings (morning and evening). Hay must be available at all times. Fresh water should always be provided in a clean large heavy crock or sipper bottle.

Grass hay (timothy or oat) is the most important component of your rabbit's diet to keep the intestinal tract healthy and should be offered daily in unlimited amounts. Hay is the main source of fiber and helps prevent gastrointestinal stasis. The fiber in the hay is extremely important in promoting normal digestion and for the prevention of hairballs.

Supplement your rabbit's diet with good high quality rabbit pellets and vegetables. Your rabbit can have unlimited pellets until approximately 6 months of age, then limit pellets to $\frac{1}{4}$ cup per 4 pounds of ideal body weight per day. Feed a variety of fresh dark leafy greens daily such as kale, dark lettuces, collard greens, broccoli, turnip greens and carrot tops (minimum of 1 cup per 4 lbs. of body weight).

Spaying and Neutering

It is very important to have your rabbit spayed or neutered to prevent medical and behavioral problems and for overall health and longevity. Your bunny can be spayed or neutered as early as 4 months of age. Spaying or neutering early helps prevent unwanted litters, urine spraying in males and reproductive cancer in females. Both males and females become calmer, more friendly, less destructive and easier to litter box train if they have been altered.

Annual Veterinary Exams

It is recommended that you take your bunny to a rabbit savvy veterinarian every year for wellness exams. If your rabbit stops eating or defecating or has diarrhea, please see your veterinarian immediately. Other clinical signs indicating necessary veterinary care of your rabbit include a runny nose and/or eyes, drooling, weight loss, dark red urine, lethargy and hair loss.

Hay! Hay! What about Hay?

A rabbit's diet is very important. Many people tend to feed the wrong pellets and not enough hay and store-bought treats that can be very harmful to rabbits. Unfortunately, there are a lot of unhealthy items out there that are made for rabbits and marketed towards their humans, making the treats and pellets look like candy. The bad thing is that these items are often full of sugar, which can cause health problems in rabbits and can even be deadly.

Hay is one of the most important parts of a rabbit's diet-80%.

Hay should be fed unlimited (meaning as much as your rabbit wants) on a daily basis. We pile the litter boxes full of hay every morning and evening so our buns will get as much hay as they want. Hay can also be put into hay baskets in your rabbit's pen, or around the house for extra munching. Make sure your rabbit is eating lots of hay! If you are overfeeding pellets your rabbit will not eat as much hay, so make sure you are limiting pellets and giving the right amount based on your rabbit's weight. We do not suggest putting hay in hay racks. While rabbits will pull at the hay and eat it, the hay consumption tends to be much less.

Why Hay?

Rabbits need lots of fiber to keep their GI tract healthy. Hay plays an important part in keeping the intestinal tract moving. Rabbits (unlike cats) cannot vomit, so everything must pass through their GI tract. One of the most common rabbit illnesses is "GI Stasis", which occurs when the GI tract slows down or stops. You will often hear that a rabbit has a hairball, which slowed down the GI tract. The fact is, the GI tract slowed down before the hairball. Because the GI tract slowed down, the hair and other food particles did not move through the intestines or stomach, causing the rabbit pain. Rabbits in GI stasis can die within twelve hours. Eating unlimited hay and a healthy diet can help to prevent this illness.

Types of Hay

Timothy -This is a great hay to be fed unlimited on a daily basis. Lots of nice stems with great color and smell.

Oat -Another one the buns love. Lots of seed heads for munching on.

Orchard -A softer, fine hay that rabbits enjoy. We often give a handful as a treat.

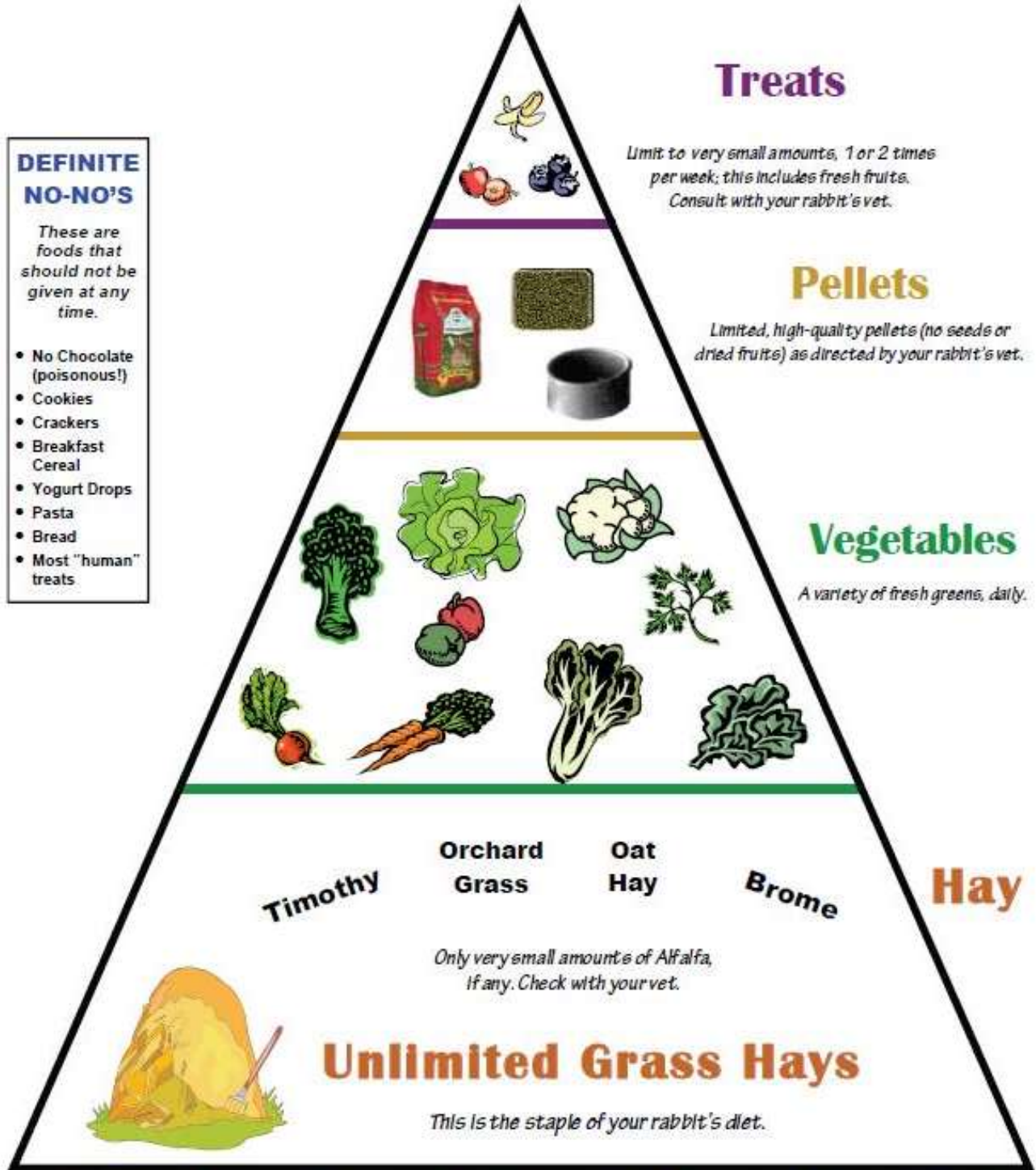
Alfalfa -This hay is for the young bunnies only. Good for growing buns that need calcium for strong bones and teeth. We do not recommend giving this to adults, though.

If you have cats, make sure they do not have access to the stored hay, as they often like to use it as a litter box.

www.bunnybunch.org

Rabbit Food Pyramid

- DEFINITE NO-NO'S**
- These are foods that should not be given at any time.*
- No Chocolate (poisonous!)
 - Cookies
 - Crackers
 - Breakfast Cereal
 - Yogurt Drops
 - Pasta
 - Bread
 - Most "human" treats



Be sure to consult with your veterinarian on the proper diet for your rabbit's optimum health.

San Diego House Rabbit Society ~ www.sandiegorabbits.org



HOT WEATHER:

It's a Killer for Rabbits and other Small Animals

By Caroline Charland

Unlike people and other animals, rabbits cannot pant or sweat to cool themselves off in hot weather. Imagine being in hot weather with a fur coat on and not being able to cool yourself down. The result is often death. People sometimes think that because wild rabbits live outside, domestic rabbits can, too. But this is far from the truth. Domestic rabbits that live outside are often kept in cages or hutches which are dreadful for rabbits. Not only are they often too small, but they are also not predator proof and they do not protect the rabbit from the heat. Wild rabbits such as cottontails make burrows in the cool earth where they spend most of the day away from the hot weather. A cottontail's life span is only about three years. But a domestic rabbit kept indoors, spayed, or neutered on a proper diet can live to more than twelve years of age.

Of course, the best way to keep a rabbit cool is in your home with the air conditioner on. Even if you can't keep your rabbit indoors all the time, consider setting up an indoor enclosure or putting your rabbit in your bathroom with a litter box, water and food and bring your rabbit in for the hotter part of the day. It could save your rabbit's life. If that is not possible, even bringing your rabbit in, in a large carrier for the hotter part of the day will help. If for whatever reason you can't do that, here are some tips and suggestions to help keep your rabbit cool.

If your rabbit is living outdoors, please make sure the area has complete shade all day long.

Do not use metal cages as they retain the heat, and your rabbit will not be able to keep cool. Fill several 2-liter soda bottles with water and freeze overnight. Put a couple of bottles in their pen in the morning. Your rabbit will lie against the bottle to keep cool. Always have extras so you can replace them in the afternoon, plus make sure you have some bottles freezing to be ready for the next day. Peel off the outside labels so your bunny doesn't chew them.

Cool clean water is very important! Water that is kept in a small water bottle or small bowl will become warm when the weather is hot. Use a large heavy crock and fill with fresh cold water twice a day, plus use a large 32 oz. water bottle. That way if the crock is knocked over, your rabbit still has the bottle. Or, if the bottle leaks or breaks, your rabbit will still have the crock. Putting ice cubes in the water helps it stay cool a bit longer.

Marble and ceramic tile tends to stay cool, and your rabbit will like to lie on it to keep cool. To make it even cooler, you can put a tile in the fridge overnight and put it in the rabbit's area mid-morning when it starts getting hot.

Misting systems work well, too, to keep the air cool. Make sure you place them so your rabbit can get cool, but still has enough dry area to get away from the mist if he wants to. When using misters, you must change the litter box and hay often to make sure there is no mold forming, and to keep flies away. Fans will not cool a rabbit, but can be used to move the air around in a room or patio area. Or, if you put a wet towel over part of your rabbit's area and direct a fan at the towel, it will help to cool the air. Of course you don't want a fan blowing directly at your rabbit, and you need to make sure your rabbit can not get to the electric cord.



SCVMA RABBIT VETERINARIANS

ANAHEIM

Brookhurst Animal Medical Center	1301 S. Brookhurst Street, 92804	714-776-7387
Katella Animal Clinic	10712 Katella Avenue, 92804	714-535-6791
Yorba Regional Animal Hospital	8290 E. Crystal Drive, 92807	714-921-8700

COSTA MESA

All Creatures Care Cottage	1912 Harbor Blvd, 92627	949-642-7151
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FOUNTAIN VALLEY

Brook-Ellis Pet Hospital	18542 Brookhurst, 92807	714-963-0440
VCA All Care Animal Referral Center	18440 Amistad Suite E, 92708	714-963-0909

FULLERTON

Sunnycrest Animal Care Center	951 W. Bastanchury Road, 92635	714-871-3000
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GARDEN GROVE

Brook Haven Pet Hospital	10092 Chapman Avenue Suite 5, 92840	714-530-2200
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HUNTINGTON BEACH

Animal Care Center of Huntington Beach	8851 Adams Avenue, 92646	714-962-3639
Animal Hospital of Huntington Beach	15021 Edwards Street, 92647	714-898-0568

IRVINE

Arbor Animal Hospital	14775 Jeffrey Road, Suite F, 92618	949-551-2727
Irvine Veterinary Services-North Park	3961 Irvine Blvd, 92602	714-573-1890
Northwood Animal Hospital	13925 Yale Avenue, Suite 115, 92620	949-559-1992

LAGUNA BEACH

Canyon Animal Hospital	20372 Laguna Canyon Rd, 92651	949-494-1076
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LAGUNA NIGUEL

Moulton Animal Hospital	27261 La Paz Road #1, 92677	949-831-7297
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LA HABRA

Sunny Hills Animal Hospital	221 E Imperial Hwy, 90602	714-526-4694
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LAKE FOREST

Serrano Animal & Bird Hospital	21771 Lake Forest Dr., Suite 111, 92630	949-855-9744
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LONG BEACH

Long Beach Animal Hospital 3816 E. Anaheim Street, 90804 562-434-9966

LOS ALAMITOS

VCA Rossmoor-El Dorado Animal Hospital 10832 Los Alamitos Blvd, 90720 562-598-8621

MISSION VIEJO

Animal & Bird Clinic of Mission Viejo 24912 Chrisanta Drive, 92691 949-768-3651
Muirlands Animal & Avian Hospital 24174 Alicia Parkway, 92691 949-770-9015

ORANGE

Orange Villa Veterinary Hospital 1826 N. Tustin Street, 92865 714-982-3472
Pet Hospital 3411 E. Chapman Avenue, 92869 714-771-3261

SAN CLEMENTE

Bird & Exotic Animal Clinic of Orange County 1833 S El Camino Real, 92672 949-492-5777

SANTA ANA

Airport-Irvine Animal Hospital 1206 S.E. Bristol, 92707 714-754-1033
Alton Centre Animal Hospital 3105 S Main Street, 92707 714-540-3105
Santa Ana Veterinary Hospital 1933 S Main Street, 92707 714-545-8281

STANTON

Stanton Pet Hospital 8591 Katella Avenue, 90680 714-828-5891

TUSTIN

North Tustin Veterinary Clinic 14081 S. Yorba Street, Suite 103, 92780 714-838-7440

WESTMINISTER

Westminister Veterinary Group 6621 Westminister Blvd, 92683 714-899-1100

YORBA LINDA

Greek & Associates Veterinary Hospital 23687 Via Del Rio, 92887 714-463-1190