

## MUST-HAVE LIST

- Housing**
- Roomy cage
  - Resting board
  - Litterbox (in cage)
  - Pellet bowl or feeder
  - Water bottle or crock
  - Toys (chew & toss)
  - Pet Carrier

- Running Space**
- Indoors:*
- Bunny-proofed room(s)
  - Litterbox
- Outdoors:*
- Fenced patio/porch/playpen (with floor)

- Consumables**
- Limited pellets daily
  - Fresh water
  - Timothy Hay (for digestive fiber and chewing recreation)
  - Fresh salads/veggies/fruits (add gradually)
  - Wood (for chewing recreation)
  - Multiple enzymes (aid digestion and prevent blockage)
  - Petroleum laxative (when needed for passing hair)

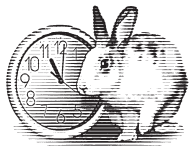
- Grooming**
- Flea comb
  - Brush
  - Flea products safe for rabbits (Advantage)
  - Toenail clippers

- Supplies**
- Dust-free litter (not wood shavings)
  - Pooper scooper
  - Whiskbroom/dustpan
  - White vinegar (for urine accidents)
  - Hand vacuum
  - Chlorine bleach (for disinfecting)
  - Newspapers

## BUY A BUNNY A LITTLE TIME

Time is all it takes for a rabbit to be discovered by the right human. When their time is up at the animal shelters, rabbits with your support can be placed in foster homes until adoptive matches are made.

Your \$18 enrollment in the House Rabbit Society helps provide needy rabbits with food, housing, veterinary care, and enough time to find them permanent homes.



HOUSE RABBIT SOCIETY

## NEED MORE INFORMATION?

Visit us on the web at [www.AllEarsSac.org](http://www.AllEarsSac.org) for information about rabbit healthcare, behavior, and local events. The National House Rabbit Society also has an extensive web site at [www.rabbit.org](http://www.rabbit.org).

## MEMBERSHIP ENROLLMENT

The annual membership to the House Rabbit Society is \$18. This includes a subscription to the quarterly *House Rabbit Journal*. The annual membership fee for the Sacramento Chapter, which includes the quarterly *All Ears in Sacramento*, is \$15. The House Rabbit Society is an all-volunteer, non-profit organization. All membership fees are tax-deductible and go towards care expenses for the rabbits and for providing educational materials.

- Please sign me up for the National Membership, \$18
- Please sign me up for the Sacramento Membership, \$15
- Please sign me up for both for \$30
- I have enclosed an additional donation of \$\_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_

ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Return with check payable to House Rabbit Society:  
Sacramento House Rabbit Society  
P.O. Box 19850, Sacramento, CA 95819-0850

## HOUSE RABBIT SOCIETY GUIDELINES

# Living with a House Rabbit



## Why a House Rabbit?

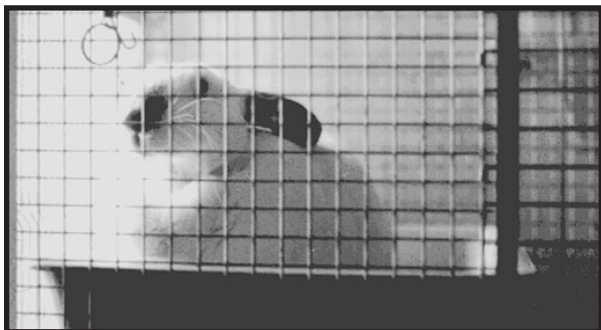
Perhaps you've just adopted your first rabbit, or maybe you already have a rabbit and would like more information to help you understand her better. The House Rabbit Society, a national nonprofit organization, recommends that you keep your rabbit in the house rather than outdoors. Rabbits are intelligent, social animals who need affection, and they can become wonderful companion animals if given a chance to interact with their human families.

[www.rabbit.org](http://www.rabbit.org)

## The Benefits of Spay and Neuter

Although most rabbits will use a litterbox, hormones may cause unneutered males and unspayed females to "mark territory." Spaying or neutering your rabbit improves litterbox habits, lessens chewing behavior, decreases territorial aggression, and gives your rabbit a happier, longer life. Have your rabbit neutered between ages 3 1/2 to 6 months, depending on sexual maturity, by an experienced rabbit veterinarian.

For rabbits more than 2 years old, get a veterinary checkup first.



## Houstraining

Rabbits may have free run of the home. However, it's best for most – and necessary for some – to start with a cage. To make cage time learning time, fasten a litterbox in the corner of the cage that your rabbit chooses for a "bathroom." As soon as he uses the box consistently, you can give him some freedom. Place one or more large litterboxes in corners of the running area outside the cage.

Use only positive reinforcement (treats and praise) – never punishment.

## Bunny-proofing

Bunny-proofing your home is part of living with a house rabbit. It is natural for rabbits to chew on furniture, rugs, drapes, and, most deadly of all, electrical cords. Cords must be concealed so that the rabbit cannot reach them. Exposed cords can be encased in vinyl tubing (found at hardware stores). By splitting the tubing lengthwise with a utility knife the cord can be pushed inside it.

Give your rabbit enough attention, safe chewables, and toys, so that she is distracted from chewing furniture and



rugs. A cardboard box stuffed with hay makes an inexpensive playbox. young rabbits (under a year) are more inclined to mischief and require more confinement and/or bunny-proofing than mature rabbits.

## House Rabbits and Other Animals

House rabbits and indoor cats can get along fine, as do rabbits and well-mannered dogs. Dogs should be trained to respond to commands before being trusted with a free-running rabbit, and supervision is needed to control a dog's playful impulses (this is especially true for puppies). Adding a second rabbit is easiest if the rabbits are neutered adults of opposite sexes, and they are first introduced for short periods in an area unfamiliar to both rabbits.



## Major Health Problems

**Intestinal blockages:** Because rabbits groom themselves constantly, they get furballs just as cats do. Unlike cats, however, rabbits cannot vomit, and excessive amounts of swallowed hair may cause a fatal blockage. If your rabbit shows a decrease in appetite and in the size of droppings, get advice from a rabbit veterinarian.

**Prevention:** Keep bunny brushed (less hair is swallowed); provide exercise time/space – at least 30 hours a week; give a fresh handful of hay daily; add fresh vegetables gradually to the diet; give petroleum laxatives during a heavy molt or if synthetics have been swallowed.

**Bacterial balance:** A rabbit's digestive tract is inhabited by healthful bacteria. If the "good" bacteria balance is upset by stale food or a sudden change in diet, harmful bacteria can take over the digestive track and kill the rabbit.

Keep all rabbit food in a cool dry place and make dietary changes slowly, giving a new food in small amounts. If no abdominal gurgling or loose stool results in 24 hours, the food may be offered again. If your rabbit goes outside, check for pesticides and toxic plants. (A list is available from your HRS).

**Infectious bacteria:** Many rabbit diseases are caused by bacteria, not viruses, and can be treated with antibiotics. If your rabbit shows symptoms of a "cold," take him to a veterinarian familiar with antibiotics that can safely be used in rabbits. Oral drugs of the Penicillin family, such as Amoxicillin, should NOT be given to a rabbit, since there is risk of destroying good intestinal bacteria.

**It's up to you:** Find an experienced rabbit doctor before a problem develops. If your rabbit has been harassed by a predator, take him to a veterinarian even if no injuries are apparent.

When it is over 80°, keep your rabbit cool with nearby wet towels or ice.

Regularly check eyes, nose, ears, teeth, weight, appetite, and droppings.

## Danger Signs

Don't waste valuable time. Call your veterinarian immediately if you see:

- Diarrhea with listlessness
- Sudden loss of appetite with bloat and abdominal gurgling
- Loss of appetite with labored breathing
- Loss of appetite with runny nose
- Head Tilt
- Incontinence (urine-soaked rear legs)
- Abscesses, lumps or swellings anywhere
- Any sudden behavior change