



NORFOLK INDUSTRIES FOR DISABLED PEOPLE

Part of *Independence Matters*

Guide to Rabbits

Scientific Order – Lagomorpha
Average Weight – 1 to 10kg
Average Life Span – 6 to 12 years
Diet – Herbivores



General Information

Rabbits can be kept as indoor or outdoor pets. They are social animals and are happy when in pairs or small groups. If keeping same sex rabbits it is best to get them neutered as this helps reduce their aggressiveness.

They like plenty of space around them to run and hop; shelves, tunnels, balls and other toys.



They are most active at dawn and dusk and get an average 8 hours sleep.

A rabbit gestation period is approximately 31 days and litter sizes range from 6-8 young.

Behaviour

They are known to grunt & lunge; especially when they feel threatened. Never keep rabbits with guinea pigs, they have different habits & may fight.

Equipment Required

- Hutch – Needs to be big enough for your rabbit to hop around in, approximately 4 times its size, and tall enough for it to stand up straight.
- Clean fresh water provided daily.
- Litter tray as they can be trained to use them.
- Food – Unlimited timothy-grass or other hay, small amount of pellets and fresh vegetables. (Do not use muesli type foods). **CERTAIN FOODS MAY NOT BE SUITABLE, PLEASE CHECK BEFORE FEEDING.** Rabbits have a sweet tooth therefore, any treats should be given in moderation.
- Bedding materials – such as Norfolk Industries shredded paper bedding see product details at -



<https://www.norfolkindustries.co.uk/products/recycled-pet-bedding/flaked-paper-bedding/>



- Tubes – (for small rabbits only) such as Norfolk Industries Chewy tubes complete with bedding, see product details at

<https://www.norfolkindustries.co.uk/products/nesting-tubes/> to provide hideaway places and help with chewing ability.

- Animal Houses complete with contents including bedding and mineral block are designed to engage small children with their small pet. Colour in the house with the lead-free pencils provided.



<https://www.norfolkindustries.co.uk/products/animal-house/medium-animal-house/> to provide hideaway places and help with chewing ability.

Maintenance Tasks

- The hutch should have a light clean once a week and a deep clean on a monthly basis.
- Empty the litter trays daily to keep the odour down.
- Provide clean bedding materials when cleaning out or more often if necessary.

Grooming and Hygiene

- Rabbits are self-cleaning and need a separate litter area with clean paper and hay; just make sure it is replaced regularly.
- It is advisable to brush excessive hair from your rabbit as they have a tendency to ingest their own fur, through cleaning, and it becomes caught up in their digestive system. They also shed their hair every 3 months. It is also a good way to check for fleas and ticks.
- Also trim the rabbit's nails with nail clippers; preferably from a young age so they can get used to it.

General Health Conditions

- Rabbits can become ill because of intestinal blockages and GI stasis (decreased motility). Insufficient fibre and water intake is the main cause of GI Stasis.
- Rabbits can get heat stroke easily and many rabbits have died of dehydration so ensure that fresh water is always available.

- Molar teeth spurs refer to sharp edges (spurs) that are developed deep inside the mouth (molar) that can cut the cheeks or tongue and make eating difficult for rabbits. A high fibre diet and chewing toys help to keep the teeth trimmed down. Occasionally they may need to be clipped by a vet.
- Viral infection such as myxomatosis and diarrhoea are another cause for common death of pet rabbits.
- Whenever your rabbit becomes sick, it is crucial to take them to your vet immediately.



General Care Information

Make sure their hutch has plenty of ventilation around it; they do not like to get too hot. If indoors keep away from radiators and outside do not place in direct sunlight.

Always ensure that you wash your hands after handling and cleaning out their hutch.

Never pull a rabbits ears or lift them up by their ears.

Regularly check your rabbits nails and clip as and when required, you may prefer to take them to a vet to carry out this job.

Information supplied by –



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NOT **DISABILITY**

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