



Did you know that...

Bunnies are prey animals and are reliant on their carers to keep them safe and stress free. They are an animal that is not a predator to any other creature, but is prey to many. They are soft footed animals and should not be housed on wire floors which cause calluses on their hocks.

Bunnies are indoor pets and should be kept inside safe from predators and noises that make them extremely nervous. If left outside with little or no human interaction they will revert to their nervous nature and may become scared of you. They will bond and trust humans the more interaction you have with them. It is cruel to leave a bunny alone in a small hutch outside where they may become fearful of you and their surroundings. They can mistrust humans if scared and their only defence can be to bite to protect themselves. This also includes poking fingers into the bunny enclosure or reaching into the top of a hutch where the bunny can mistake your hand for a bird of prey. They are inquisitive and intelligent creatures and must have time out of their hutch each day to explore and play. They should always be supervised if exercising outdoors in the day time.

Bunnies can be litter trained and are clean animals; they use their litter trays more and more once they are desexed and as they mature.

Desexing protects the girls from uterine cancers, which has an 80% mortality rate and calms the aggressive and anti social behaviours in both sexes that results from puberty.

They are social animals. The more that you interact with your bunny the more they will learn to trust you and become inquisitive and affectionate. If you do not interact with your bunny, and leave them outside alone, with outdoor noises they become frightened they will consider you to be a threat to their safety when you approach them and will become scared of you.

Heat: Bunnies do not sweat and can die of heat stress if left out in the direct sun or in hot weather. Always bring the bunny inside when temperatures are above 25 degrees. Never use metal hutches, these are ovens for bunnies. In their natural state they would retreat into cool burrows in the heat.

Housing Indoor bunnies: Do not waste money on a hutch as most hutches on the market are too small anyway. All they need is a fenced area in the family room, for when you want to contain them, with a cat house, a bunny tunnel, a litter and hay tray and a sturdy bowl of water. When you are home the bunnies can have a run around and interact with the family.

The main diet for a bunny is hay and fresh salad greens (no iceberg lettuce) and fresh water. A small amount of pellet can be fed to young bunnies or those that are underweight or ill. A bunny should not be on a diet of pellet or "birdseed" mix, which can result in health problems later on. Pellets can also be used as a treat (approx a tablespoon morning and night). The best pellet is "Oxbow" available from some vets.

Health: Bunnies have delicate constitutions and if they stop eating they can die within a day. Owners must be vigilant to monitor the bunny's behaviour and to intervene immediately if the bunny shows signs of illness or is not their normal self. Often bunnies show symptoms of being unwell at night when we notice that they are off their food, when vet clinics are closed. This requires a visit to a 24hr Animal Emergency Centre which can be costly. These are all important consideration.

Rewarding: A bunny is unlike other domestic pets, they prefer not to be picked up and they must learn to trust their human carers. The time that you spend with your bunny will be rewarded with trust as this fragile creature learns to trust and rely on you to take care of them. Much pleasure comes from observing their behaviour and their interaction with each other and their family.