

Rabbit Home Health Check -Ups

Your rabbit's health and well being is important. Rabbits are delicate, sensitive and have a tendency to hide illness. It's up to you to watch them and check carefully to make sure they stay healthy and happy. Keep up to date information on your bunny. Know what they eat, drink, their activity level, their habits, favorite foods, etc. Any changes in normal behavior can alert you to a potential medical problem. If you are observant you can prevent disease progression and possibly save their lives by getting them to the vet where they can receive appropriate treatment.

We suggest that you take your rabbit to the veterinarian once a year for a check up, however you should be monitoring your rabbit's behavior and health every day. If you notice anything out of the ordinary, and you have questions, contact your veterinarian. Quick action can save your rabbit's life.

Rabbit Haven recommends that you check your rabbit one time each month (at least) for any signs and symptoms of disease or any change in their behavior. Check the list below for a guide to carry out your rabbit's home health exam.

- **Mouth/Teeth:** Check your rabbit's mouth and teeth. Verify that the teeth are still growing straight, not overgrown, broken, loose, discolored and that the rabbit isn't drooling. Check the gums. Look for a nice healthy pink color in the gums.
- **Fur/Skin:** Make sure that your rabbit's coat is healthy, doesn't have any flakes, fleas and that there are no lumps under the skin. Check fur; make sure the coat is clean and well groomed.
- **Ears:** Look inside to see if they are clean. If you see wax build up or flakiness, a trip to your veterinarian is needed. Check for any odor.
- **Nails:** Trim your rabbit's nails, if needed. Long nails may tear off, bleed and become infected. Use good quality nail clipper designed for your size bunny.
- **Toes:** Feel the toes. Make sure they are all intact, straight and no signs of sores or abrasions.
- **Feet/legs:** Check that the bottoms of the feet are covered with fur, or if you see skin, that it isn't bright red or infected. Watch for any limping or any weakness in front or back legs, watch for normal stance and movements. (Hopping, running, sitting up on back legs. Balance ok?)
- **Scent Glands:** If the scent glands are dirty, clean gently with a Q-Tip dipped in mineral oil.
- **Eyes:** Make sure there isn't discharge from the eyes. Lift up the lid and check for a healthy pink color. Check for any discoloration in the eye, redness or swelling.
- **Nose:** Look for a dry clean nose. Check for any discoloration on outside of nose.
- **Respiration:** Listen for clear, regular breathing. Learn normal respiration rates for your bunny.
- **Heart:** If you have a stethoscope, listen to your rabbit's heart. Make sure the beat sounds regular. Learn normal heart rates for your bunny.
- **Temp:** is the rabbit hotter/cooler?
- **Droppings:** Nothing looks nicer than large moist bunny poops. Small or malformed droppings could be a sign of a problem. Watch carefully. Note any changes.
- **Urine:** If your rabbit suddenly starts urinating outside the box, or appears to be having trouble peeing, contact your vet. Is the urine a normal color? Rabbit urine can vary in color and is sometimes red, but if you notice anything in it such as red spots or flakes, please have it checked ASAP. Also, there should not be urine stains on your rabbit's fur or hindquarters.
- **Disposition:** Has your rabbit's personality changed? Not as active? Not as playful? Does she have difficulty moving around? Not eating as much? Any changes in behavior can be signs of disease or discomfort. Contact your veterinarian immediately.

If you do this once a month you will have a better sense of what is normal for your rabbit and you will pick up on problems earlier. This in conjunction with an annual vet exam, will help make your rabbit a healthier companion for years to come.

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