

Red Door Animal Shelter's

Basic Bunny Care Booklet

We specialize in rabbit education and rescue,
bunny bondings, boarding, and quarterly Spa Days.



Red Door is no-kill animal shelter located at
2410 W. Lunt Chicago, IL 60645
773-764-2242 reddoorshelter.org

updated February 2016

How much will a pet rabbit cost?

A lot more than you think!

Many rabbits are purchased impulsively, especially around Easter. Who could resist a cute baby bunny at the pet store for only \$25? You should! Adopting a rabbit from Red Door is a wiser choice because the bunny will be spay/neutered, fully vetted, litter box trained, microchipped and socialized. Please keep in mind that a rabbit is a high maintenance pet that can live 8-12 years. Are you prepared to make a long term commitment?

One time costs: \$225 and up

Adoption fee - \$100 (*fixed and vetted*)

Cage/Exercise pen \$75-200

Litter box - \$10

Water crock \$10

Grooming brush/Nail trimmers -\$20

Cord covers - \$10

Monthly Costs: \$80 and up

Fresh greens - \$40-60 (*salads 2x a day*)

Timothy hay \$25-75 (*buy in bulk for better price*)

Litter 40lb bag - \$5-20

Digestive Support Supplements - \$10

Medicines \$10-100 (*if your bunny has ongoing issues*)

Quarterly costs: \$50 and up

Vet nail trim/ear cleaning - \$25-50

Spa Day at Red Door- \$25-30 (*ear cleaning, grooming, nail trim*)

Toys/boxes/blankets - \$20-40

Baby Gas X - \$10

Laxatone -\$10

Vet costs:

Annual exam - \$50-100 (*elderly rabbits need bi-annual exam*)

Emergency care - \$300-1000+

Spay/neuter surgery - \$100-400 (*if you purchase rather than adopt*)

Medicines (*prices will vary with short or long term illness*)

Pet insurance- \$12 per month (*VPI is the only company that covers rabbits*)



Recommended Exotic Vet List

An exotic veterinarian is one who specializes in small animals, reptiles and birds.
We only recommend members of the Association of Exotic Mammal Veterinarians .

Blue Pearl ER**

3735 Dempster
Skokie
847-673-9110

Midwest Animal ER**

7510 W. North Av
Elmwood Park
708-453-4755

Animal ER**

1195 E. Palatine Rd.
Arlington Heights
847-394-6049

Chicago Exotics *

3757 Dempster
Skokie, IL 60076
847-329-8709

Mokena Animal Clinic

9455 W 191st St
Mokena, IL 60448
708-479-2811

Purdue University Vet Hospital

625 Harrison St/VTH
West Lafayette, IN 47907
765-494-7789

Midwest Bird and Exotic

7510 W. North Av
Elmwood Park, IL 60707
708-453-8181

Northwest Exotic Vet Clinic

572 Bartlett RD
Streamwood, IL 60107
630-540-2490

University of Illinois Small Animal Clinic

1008 W Hazelwood Dr
Urbana, IL 61802
217-333-5300

Danada Veterinary Hosp.

10 West Loop Rd
Wheaton, IL 60189
630-665-6161

Autumn Green Animal Hosp.

39W124 Keslinger Rd
Geneva, IL 60134
630-232-2222

University of Wisconsin

2015 Linden Drive
Madison, WI 53706
608-263-7600

Lombard Veterinary Hosp.

244 E. St Charles Rd
Lombard, IL 60148
630-627-7090

Bremen Animal Hosp.

7613 W 159th St.
Tinley Park, IL 60477
708-532-5577

CARE Animal Hospital

8989 74th St
Kenosha, WI 53142
262-694-651

Ness Exotic Wellness Center

1007 Maple Av
Lisle, IL 60532
630-737-1281

Grayslake Animal Hosp.

1490 E. Belvidere
Grayslake, IL 60030
847-223-8612

Brook Falls Exotic Care

14850 W Lisbon Rd
Menomonee Falls, WI
262) 781-5277

Bronzeville Animal Clinic

203 E 31st St
Chicago, IL 60616
312-949-1838

Avian & Exotic Animal Clinic

622 N Earl Ave.
Lafayette, IN 47904
765-446-1816

Glenwood Village Pet Hosp.

555 E Glenwood-Lansing Rd
Glenwood, IL 60425
708-758-2400

Avian & Exotic Animal Clinic

9330 Waldemar Rd.
Indianapolis, IN 46268
317-879-8633

* Treats Red Door shelter bunnies

** Call ahead to make sure an exotic vet is on duty

Daily Rabbit Health Check

As prey animals, rabbits tend to hide pain and illness. Be vigilant and know how to spot warning signs. If you see any of these symptoms, call your exotic vet immediately!

These symptoms can be life-threatening!

- ? **Lack of appetite** or refusing favorite treat means something is wrong with your bunny!
 - ? **Lethargic**, unresponsive or sitting in hunched-over position - could be gas or other pain
 - ? **Restlessness** or stretched out in unusual positions may indicate gas in the GI tract.
 - ? **Coughing, sneezing or wheezing** may indicate respiratory infection.
 - ? **Discharge from eyes or nose** may indicate respiratory infection or dental issue.
 - ? **Labored or rapid breathing** could indicate a variety of illness.
 - ? **Loud tooth grinding** may indicate pain.
 - ? **Scabs, bald spots**, excessive scratching or flaky skin indicates fur mites.
 - ? **Head tilt, loss of balance, rolling on floor** indicates a serious neurological condition.
 - ? **Overgrown teeth, drooling, or lumps along the jaw** indicates serious dental issues.
 - ? **Feet are red, swollen or bleeding** indicates hock sores caused by wire bottom cages.
 - ? **Bloated, hard or doughy stomach** or sides sucked in could indicate gas or GI stasis.
 - ? **Rapid weight loss** is an indication of intestinal parasites or possibly cancer.
 - ? **Unusual poops** that are watery, misshapen or strung with fur indicates serious GI issue.
 - ? **Excessive thirst** could indicate a kidney, bladder or liver issue.
 - ? **Blood or chalky residue in urine** may indicate urinary tract infection, stones or cancer.
- * Rabbit urine can vary in color from clear - yellow - red, depending on the diet. You should only be concerned if you see spots of blood or chalky residue in the urine.



Normal poops are dry, odorless and plentiful. They may range in color from light to dark



Small, misshapen poops means bunny is not eating enough hay and may have dental pain.



Poops strung with fur means bunny needs help passing ingested fur with a supplement called laxatone.



Cecal poops come in clusters and will have a very strong odor. Your rabbit should be eating these for good GI health. If you see this poop, something is wrong with bunny's diet, or he may be overweight.

***Monitor what goes
in and what comes out
of your bunny!!***

Common Rabbit Health Issues

Basic Rabbit Vitals:

Heart Rate (relaxed): 130-325 beats per minute
Respiratory Rate (relaxed): 30-60 breathes per minute
Temperature 101-104 F (38-40 C)

Many rabbit diseases have similar symptoms. When in doubt, consult your exotic vet.

GI Stasis - This is a very serious condition where the rabbit's digestive system shuts down. Your bunny will not eat or poop, and harmful bacteria and gases build up in the GI tract. This is a very painful condition and can be **fatal if not resolved within 24 hours**. There are a number of situations that can bring on GI stasis such as: dental pain, contaminated produce, fur balls, gas or stress. If your bunny does not eat his salads in his usual manner, offer a treat. If he refuses a treat, then he is definitely feeling ill. Give your bunny one syringe (1cc/ml) of baby **Gas X (simethicone)** every hour, up to 3 doses. If he doesn't perk up and start eating, **call your exotic vet immediately**.

Dental Disease - Some rabbits are genetically prone to dental issues. Some develop dental disease due to poor diet. Without sufficient fiber to keep teeth worn down, tiny spurs will grow on the molars, causing pain when eating. These points can be easily filed down with a vet visit. Regular filings will vary from 30 days to 6 months, depending on the rabbit. Signs that your rabbit may have a dental issue are drooling, weepy eyes, lack of appetite, or smaller than normal poops, indicating that he is not eating as much hay as usual.

E. cuniculi - This is a very complex disease caused by a protozoan parasite that is either ingested or passed from mother to baby. It can remain dormant for the entire life span or it may become an active infection. *E.C.* usually affects the brain, liver, kidneys, or eyes. Consult with your exotic vet at the first sign of any of these symptoms: partial or complete paralysis, loss of coordination, seizures, rolling, urinary incontinence, head tilt, unusual eye movements or any spots in the eye.

Respiratory Disease- Sneezing, wheezing or nasal/eye discharge can be signs of **Upper Respiratory Infection**, which can be caused by bacteria such as bordetella, staphylococcus, pseudomonas, MRSA or pasteurella - collectively known as "snuffles." **Lower Respiratory Infections**, such as pneumonia, occur in the lungs, may not have obvious symptoms. If your rabbit has rapid breathing in a rested state (more than 30-60 breaths per minute, or if he stretches his neck to breathe through the mouth, please contact your vet. Respiratory problems can also be triggered by non-bacterial factors such as cigarette smoke, allergies, nasal blockages (tumors, inhaled hay/pellets), dental issues or lesions from rabbit syphilis.

Heart Disease - Due to over-breeding and malnutrition, we are seeing more heart disease in rabbits. Arrhythmias, high blood pressure and congestive heart failure can be controlled with daily medications, allowing your bunny to live a happy life. Many rabbits have lived for years after a heart disease diagnosis. If your bunny is over 5 years of age, has shallow or rapid breathing, is lethargic, or has respiratory symptoms, please consult your exotic vet for diagnostic testing.

Sudden Weight Loss - If your rabbit is losing weight, despite a healthy appetite, she may have intestinal parasites. Red Door rabbits are checked for parasites upon arrival, but it's very easy for a bunny to ingest new parasites if they've been outdoors. Your exotic vet will do a simple "fecal float" to determine if parasites are present and what medications should be used for treatment.

continued...

Common Rabbit Health Issues cont.

Abscesses - When a rabbit suffers an injury such as a deep wound or an infected tooth, an abscess will form around the area and create a pocket of pus. Unlike most mammals, rabbits have very thick pus that cannot drain, so the abscess must be surgically removed. Regularly check your bunny for swellings or bumps. Pay close attention to the jaw area. If you feel anything unusual, **call your exotic vet immediately**.

Ear Infection - Rabbits can develop a build up of wax and debris inside the ear canal. Ears should be cleaned every 2-3 months. Lop rabbits need their ears cleaned more frequently, because heat and moisture get trapped inside the ear canal. If your rabbit shakes his head a lot, scratches at the ears frequently or if upright ears fall down, this is a sign of ear infection. If left untreated, it can develop into a more serious condition.

Obesity - You should never have to worry about your rabbit being overweight if you are feeding a proper diet and providing plenty of exercise. Pelleted foods are designed to fatten up animals quickly, so limit timothy pellets to treat portions of 1 teaspoon or less a day. Alfalfa and oat hays can also lead to obesity.

Hock Sores - Some rabbits will develop calluses on the bottoms of the hind feet. These calluses can break open and get infected. Provide soft bedding such as Care Fresh bedding or a soft towel or blanket. Periodically check your bunny's feet by pushing the fur aside. Administer **A&D ointment** to any indication of a callus. If the sore is inflamed, pus-filled or split open, **call your exotic vet**.

Fur Mites - If you see flaky skin or bald patches on your bunny, it is most likely Cheyletiella, commonly known as fur mites. These are microscopic mites can be easily treated by your vet. **Do not apply any type of dog or cat flea/tick products, as they may be fatal to your bunny.**

Rabbit First Aid Kit:



Infant GasX (simethicone) - When a rabbit refuses to eat, and changes positions as if he is uncomfortable, he may have a gas bubble. **Give 1cc/ml every hour, not to exceed 3 doses**. If you see no improvement, call your exotic vet immediately. Infant Simethicone can be purchased over the counter at any drugstore.

Styptic powder - to stop blood flow if a nail is broken or cut too short. Do not use on skin wounds.

A&D Ointment - help sooth callus and hock sores on the bottom of rabbit's feet.

Laxatone - helps to pass fur balls. When stringy poops are spotted, give 1/2 teaspoon daily for 3 days, then 2-3 times per week for the next 2 weeks. Be sure to get maple or malt flavor, not tuna flavor.

Oxbow Critical Care® - a premium recovery food which can be given to herbivores that are unwilling to eat their normal diet due to illness, surgery or poor nutritional status. This specially formulated product contains all the essential nutrients of a complete diet as well as high-fiber timothy hay to ensure proper gut physiology and digestion. It can only be purchased through your vet, who will advise you on how to administer it.

Syringes - these are critical tools for first aid. 60ml feeding syringes work best with Critical Care and 1.0ml/cc syringes are perfect for administering simethicone. These can purchased from your exotic vet.

Healthy Bunny Diet

Contrary to popular belief, rabbits are not nocturnal animals. They are **crepuscular**, which means they are most **active in the morning and in the early evening**. Therefore, it is best to feed your bunny at breakfast and dinner time. A regular schedule will keep bunny happy and will make it easier for you to monitor his intake and output.

Fresh Water

Your rabbit requires plenty of fluids to keep the digestive tract hydrated. Red Door recommends a water bowl rather than a water bottle. This will allow the rabbit to take in more water. Imagine how thirsty you would be after eating a bunch of hay! Make sure to get a solid, heavy bowl that bunny cannot tip over. Clean and refill the bowl daily. **Do not add vitamins to the water!** Rabbits get plenty of vitamins from their hay and greens.



Timothy Hay from Oxbow or Small Pet Select

This is a staple of your rabbit's diet. It provides essential nutrients and **fiber to keep the digestive tract moving and to keep teeth properly worn down**. Your rabbit should have access to hay all day long, and be sure to refresh the hay as needed. For a treat, mix in other hays such as Brome Grass, Orchard Grass or Oat Hay. Alfalfa hay can be fattening for adult rabbits, so it should only be given to baby bunnies.

Fresh Salad Greens

A variety of **thoroughly** washed greens will provide your bunny with nutrients and water. The size of the salad will vary with the size and appetite of the bunny. A dwarf rabbit may eat only 1-2 cups per day, while a large rabbit may require 4-8 cups a day. A rabbit will not overeat salad, so don't be afraid to give extra greens until you figure out the proper amount. If any greens are left over for a couple hours, throw it away. Please refer to **Red Door's salad list** for specific details on which greens to feed and which to avoid.

Pellets

Pelleted food or "rabbit chow" was designed for breeders as a cheap way to fatten a rabbit quickly for meat or fur. While alfalfa pellets are important for a baby bunny's growth, after 1 year of age, pellets should only be given as a treat - no more than 1 teaspoon per day. The best pellet to feed an adult rabbit should be made with Timothy hay rather than alfalfa. It should contain at least 17% fiber. **AVOID any "fiesta" mixes that contain seeds or dried fruit or vegetables.** These pellet mixes can cause serious - even fatal- problems for your rabbit. **Red Door highly recommends pellets from Oxbow or Small Pet Select.**

Supplements and Treats

DO NOT indulge your bunny's begging with junk food. Avoid yogurt drops, granola or seed treats, or any treat made with corn or wheat. Instead, offer your bunny a handful of fresh herbs, pet grass, botanical hay, or healthy treats like **Oxbow's Simple Rewards**.

The best treat you can give your rabbit is **Oxbow's Natural Science Digestive Support** - a high-fiber supplement containing various herbal ingredients that aid gut motility and promote growth of good bacteria. This product replaces the papaya enzyme tablet that was a popular digestive supplement during shedding seasons.

Other Oxbow Natural Science supplements are available per your exotic vet's recommendations.



Food Guide Pyramid

At breakfast and dinner feed a mix of:

Alfalfa sprouts
Arugula
Beet greens
Bibb, Boston or Butter Lettuce
Celery Leaves
Chard
Chicory
Cilantro
Clover
Dandelion Greens
Dill
Endive
Escarole
Fennel
Frisee
Green Leaf Lettuce
Herbs - mint, thyme or basil
Parsley - flat/Italian only
Radicchio
Red Leaf Lettuce
Romaine Lettuce
Sage
Sorrel
Spring Mix
Watercress
Wheat grass



Crisp and clean Romaine lettuce is a great staple in a rabbit's diet



*How much salad should I feed daily?
1-6 cups depending on the size of the bunny.*

Limit Treats to once a day:

Fresh Herbs
1 tsp of Timothy Pellets per day
Oxbow Simple Rewards Treats
Oxbow Digestive Support
Apple or Pear branches
Pet Grass
Botanical hays



Carrots and fruits are high in sugar and can cause an imbalance in the digestive system

Never Feed:

Iceberg or Head Lettuce
Cabbage
Nuts, Seeds or Beans
Chocolate or any Candy
Cookies or crackers
Yogurt Drops
Raisins or Dried Fruit
Broccoli or Cauliflower
Potatoes or Tomatoes
Celery or Rhubarb stalks
Citrus Fruits



Iceberg lettuce has no nutritional value and can cause diarrhea

Due to high calcium content feed only 1-2x a week:

Spinach
Collard Greens
Mustard Greens
Kale
Turnip Greens
Carrot Tops



**Unlimited
Timothy Hay
All Day**

Red Door recommends Oxbow Hay products because they are fresh and tasty. You can purchase hay at the shelter or check online for local pet stores who sell the Oxbow brand.

Be sure to *thoroughly* wash all greens!

Rabbit Habitat

**Red Door strongly believes that all domestic rabbits should be kept INSIDE!
Outside dangers include: predators, pesticides, poisonous plants, and parasites**

Your bunny will need a safe living space of her own. Rabbit habitats must meet these basic criteria:

- * Habitat must be at least 4-6 times the size of the bunny to allow plenty of room for stretching.
- * Smooth or carpeted floors to prevent hock sores and broken nails/toes.
- * Moderate temperature as rabbits cannot tolerate cold drafts, humidity, or temperatures above 80 degrees.
- * Fresh Timothy hay in the litter box and fresh water in a heavy or non-skid bowl.
- * Creature comforts such as cardboard boxes, tunnels, chew toys, blankets and perhaps some soft music.
- * NO SMOKING! Cigarette smoke can be toxic to all animals.



Exercise pens are cheap, versatile and easy to clean. They range from 24" to 48" high, and can be folded up for easy storage and transport. If bunny can jump the pen, **add netting with clips to the top of the pen.**

Storage Cube Shelving and **zip ties** allow for creativity in small spaces. **Make sure the grid openings are 1" or smaller to prevent injuries.** Provide smooth flooring to avoid foot injuries.



Bunny Condos from Leith Petwerks.com are durable and easy to clean. Floors and ramps are carpeted for traction and comfort.

Cages should have smooth plastic bottoms and be a minimum of 36"L x24"D. Doors that open on the top and sides are ideal. Consider adding a pen around a cage so bunny can come and go.



Your bunny will also require 2-4 hours of exercise time each day. When you are home to supervise playtime, be sure to thoroughly bunny-proof any room your bunny has access to.

- * Cover all exposed wires, cables and cords with hard plastic protectors.
- * Block access to any baseboards which may contain lead paint or wallpapers with glue.
- * Remove or relocate all houseplants, as most are toxic to rabbits.
- * Block off dangerous areas such as stairs and major appliances.
- * Keep important books, papers, shoes and remote controls off the floor.

Bunny -Proofing supplies are available at any hardware store.

- * Plexiglas to cover woodwork, paint, wallpaper and plaster
- * Hard plastic cord covers for exposed wires.
- * Perfume, Icy Hot on furniture legs to deter chewing.
- * Baby gates, wood planks or cardboard tubes for blocking access.



Litter Box FAQ's

The most important step in litter training your bunny is to get her/him spay/neutered. An unfixed rabbit will naturally want to mark territory with urine and poops. To a fixed rabbit, a litter box is like home: a place to sleep, eat, play and make waste. It's not surprising that some people are a little concerned about this, but don't worry! With your help, bunny's box will be clean and safe. Your rabbit will keep himself clean, but it is your responsibility to provide a clean, safe litter and to refresh the hay at least once a day.

1. What kind of litter box should I get for my rabbit? A large cat litter box is perfect for small to medium sized rabbits. A large rabbit or bonded pair may require an extra large box or even a mortar-mixing tub from the hardware store. We do not recommend corner litter boxes because they are too small for most rabbits. Boxes with grids or screens are also not recommended because a bunny can easily get a nail or toe caught.

2. What do I put in my rabbit's litter box? To absorb urine and odors, line the bottom of the box with 1-2" of a rabbit-safe litter listed below. Put a large handful of Timothy hay on one side of the box and refresh the hay daily. This will encourage your bunny to eat and do his business at the same time.

Safe Litters:

*Feline or Equine Pine, Wood fuel pellets
Critter Country, Oxbow Eco-straw
Yesterday's News, PaPurr or Carefresh
Plain newspapers*

Unsafe Litters:

*Clay or clumping cat litter (can cause blockages)
Pine or Cedar shavings (liver and respiratory damage)
Oat/Alfalfa based litters (can cause weight gain)
Corn cob litters or Swheat Scoop (can cause blockages)*

3. What if my bunny eats his litter? As long as you are using a safe litter, made of wood or paper, it will pass through your rabbit's system as fiber. Unsafe litters can cause weight gain, upset stomach, liver damage or intestinal blockages. These are life-threatening conditions!

4. How often do I clean my rabbit's litter box? Depending on the size and habits of your bunny, a litter box needs to be dumped at least every 2-3 days. Wipe down with a **1:10 vinegar and water solution** and rinse with hot water. Add a fresh layer of litter and top off with timothy hay. **NEVER** use household cleaners such as bleach or detergent, as they are toxic to rabbits.

5. What if my bunny kicks his litter out of his box? Rabbits are natural diggers, and from time to time they may decide that their litter box is an excellent place to excavate. One solution is to put the litter box in a plastic storage bin with an opening cut in one side. Another solution is to provide your rabbit with a separate "diggy box"- a high sided cardboard box filled with shredded paper, toys, old phone books, towels, etc.

6. What if my rabbit poops outside the box? A few pellets are to be expected outside the box to mark territory, especially in the first week of bunny's arrival to his new home. Just sweep up the pellets and put them in the box. Older buns with arthritis may find it difficult to jump into their box, so a low sided box is recommended.

7. What about urine outside of the box? If you see small puddles or dribbles of urine, it could indicate a urinary issue or infection. Call your exotic vet immediately! If your bunny is deliberately peeing outside of the box, then he is trying to tell you that he is upset about some change in his routine or environment. Perhaps he would like a second box?
Or he doesn't approve of your redecorating his pen?

Email us for advice at:
info@reddoorshelter.org

Rabbits love their litter boxes



Rabbit Handling

Pet me! Rabbits are very social animals and they love the comforting touch of humans or other rabbits. If your bunny gives you a nose bump, a gentle nip, or digs his paws on your legs, he may be telling you he wants your undivided attention. Most rabbits enjoy a good nose rub, gentle stroking of the ears or cheeks, and long pets from head to toe. Each bunny has a different sweet spot and may also have areas where he doesn't like to be touched, so get to know your bunny and he may reward you with a lick or two, or even some tooth purring.

Don't pick me up! As prey animals rabbits are naturally fearful of heights and feel safer with all four feet on the ground. When you pick them up they may think you are a predator such as a hawk or coyote trying to carry them away for a meal. So it's normal for bunny to react in fear by squirming, scratching, grunting or even biting. This can result in serious injury such as a twisted spine or broken bones if the bunny is dropped.

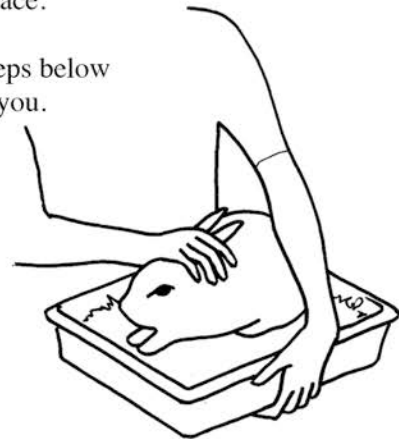
At Red Door, our rabbits are trained to be carried in their litter box, where they feel safe.

This is the safest and easiest way to transport your bunny from place to place.

If you want to learn how to properly pick up a rabbit, please follow the steps below and practice daily. With time and patience, your bunny will learn to trust you.

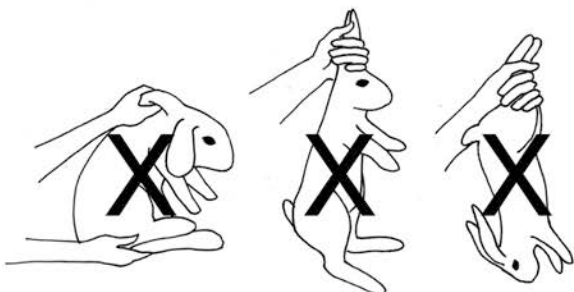
Offer healthy treats as a reward.

1. Approach your rabbit slowly, sit on the floor and pet him gently.
2. Gently put one hand under the rabbit's chest and use your other hand to "scoop up" and support the hind legs.
3. Bring the rabbit close to your body and hold it's back securely against your chest.
4. SLOWLY stand up, holding the rabbit gently, but firmly.
5. Carry the rabbit short distances only. Use a carrying case or the litter box for longer distances.
6. To put the rabbit down, SLOWLY bend your knees to lower yourself to the ground.
7. Be very careful when releasing the rabbit, as they tend to squirm as you get closer to the ground.
8. Offer your bunny a healthy treat for a job well-done!



Never pick up a rabbit like this:

Scruffing a rabbit or picking up by the ears or legs can result in serious injury or death.



Rabbits feel safest on the ground. If you must pick up, support the hind legs!

Grooming your Rabbit

Rabbits are fastidious groomers, and will keep themselves clean, but they will need a little help from their human friends. While brushing a bunny is easy, nails trims or ear cleaning can be difficult for inexperienced rabbit handlers, so let the experts at Red Door assist.

We host quarterly **Spa-Di-Da-Days** every January, April, July, and October to coincide with shedding seasons. We offer grooming, nails trims, ear cleaning, scent gland cleaning and our fun-themed photos. If you can't make it to a spa day, nail trims and ear cleaning can also be done by appointment. Please call the shelter to check availability - 773-764-2242.

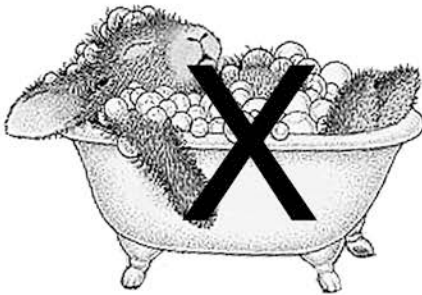
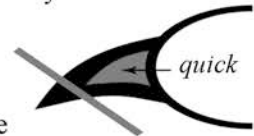
FUR - Your rabbits will shed every 3 months with the change of seasons, alternating between heavy and light fur loss. She will be constantly grooming, and ingesting fur. But rabbits do not have a vomit reflex and cannot cough up fur balls like cats do. Therefore it's your job to **brush your bunny weekly-daily if they are shedding** or have angora fur, which can easily tangle into painful mats. Due to the delicate nature of rabbit skin, use extreme caution if you must use scissors to remove mats. Serious matting must be shaved off by an exotic vet.

The best tool to use for fur removal is a **cat slicker brush** or the Furminator. Both tools will help to remove the loose undercoat. Also try **sticky rollers, grooming mitts**, or run wet hands down the length of bunny's body. Gently pull out small tufts of fur - be very careful not to pull on bunny's delicate skin.

EARS - Although your rabbit can clean the outside of his ears, wax and debris can still build up deep in the ear canal. This can lead to an infection, especially for lop-eared rabbits, whose ear canals are dark and moist. Check in your rabbit's ears monthly to see if there is any visible wax or foul odor. Have bunny's ears cleaned every 3-6 months by a professional. Consult your exotic vet or call Red Door for an appointment.

NAILS - Rabbits need regular trims every 2-3 months, and it can be a difficult job for new rabbit owners. Long nails will make it painful for your bunny to walk, and they can tear off if snagged, leaving your bunny with a bloody paw. As nails grow, so do the veins, or "quicks." Quicks that are too long will only recede with more frequent nail trims.

Using sharp clippers, cut the nails at a 45 degree angle, about 1/8 inch away from the quick. For dark colored nails use a mini flashlight to illuminate the nail so can see where the quick ends. Emery boards can be used to file rough edges. Have styptic powder on hand in case you accidentally cut into the quick. Gently press the powder on the nail tip and apply pressure to stop the blood flow.



NEVER give a rabbit a bath!

Giving a bunny a bath in water can be extremely stressful and could lead to shock or hypothermia. If necessary, use a wet washcloth to spot clean your rabbit. Do not use any human shampoo or "bunny shampoo" that you see at the pet store. These could be toxic.

If you have questions about your bunny's hygiene please contact us at Red Door:

773.764.2242

info@reddoorshelter.org

Rabbit Body Language

Binkyng - Happy happy joy joy! I'm so happy I want to dance!

Bobbing of head - My eyes have poor depth of field and this is how I judge distance.

Boxing - Leave me alone and don't touch my stuff!

Butt up while sitting - I'm too lazy to go to the litter box. I'll just pee here.

Chinning - You're mine now that I've marked you with my odorless scent gland.

Circling - I am enamored with you, let's play!

Ears forward - Shhhhh! I heard something. Was that the refrigerator opening?

Ears back, body flat to ground - I'm scared and trying to look invisible.

Ears back, tail up - I'm scared and may attack if I feel threatened.

Flopping - I'm not having a seizure, I'm just chillin'.

Fur Pulling, Carrying Hay in Mouth - I'm pregnant or at least I think I am.

Grunting, Honking - Watch out, I'm angry. Or maybe I just felt like talking to you.

Lying flat with legs out - Ahhhhhh, life is good.

Lying in an unusual position or sides sucked in - My tummy is gassy and hurts.

Licking - You are my master, so I will groom you now.

Lunging - I'm warning you! Back off!

Mounting - I am the boss of you. Or maybe I'm just feeling frisky.

Nipping - I don't like what you're doing, pay attention to me, move out of my way.

Nose Nudging - I want you to pet me or I want you to move out of my way.

Periscoping - Standing up allows me to survey my vast kingdom.

Screaming - HELP! I'm in intense pain or scared to death.

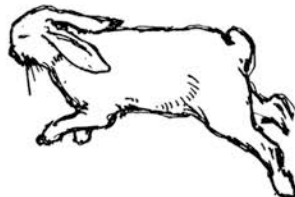
Thumping - I sense danger and must warn everyone! I don't like what you just did.

Tooth Grinding - My teeth hurt real bad, please take me to the vet.

Tooth Purring - Quietly chattering my teeth means I'm very content.



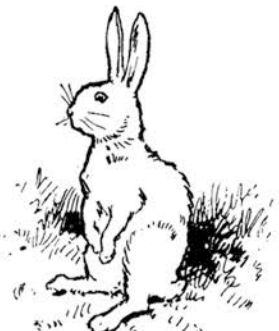
*Binkyng:
Whoo Hoo!*



*Flopping:
Zzzzzzzzzzz*



*Ears back, tail up:
Watch out!*



*Periscoping:
What's that over there?*

Finding Your Bunny a Friend

Rabbits are very social creatures and are usually happier and healthier with a bunny companion. A bonded pair of rabbits can entertain and comfort each other during the day, while you are at work. If you are considering a friend for your bunny, be aware that **it is up to your rabbit to choose his mate, not you**. Like humans, rabbits are very particular about who they associate with.

At Red Door, we specialize in bunny bondings by using the “speed-dating” method. We will introduce your bunny to all available rabbits and observe their interactions to give you our best recommendations for a companion. Keep in mind that the bonding process does take patience and time- anywhere from 2 days to 2 months. Your Red Door bonding counselor will offer advice, as well as tips and tricks to get them together.

1. All rabbits must be **spay/neutered at least 1 month** prior to their first date. Otherwise they will be controlled by their hormones. Fixed males can still have viable sperm up to a month after neuter surgery.
2. **Opposite sex bondings work best**, although some males will accept another male friend. Female rabbits are territorial by nature, so we do not recommend introducing 2 females, even if they are both spayed.
3. **“Speed dating”** is great way to introduce your bunny to potential mates. At Red Door, we use an introduction screen to separate the rabbits when they first meet, in case of hate at first sight. It may take up to 3 visits to the shelter before your bunny chooses a friend.
4. Let our bonding experts assess the behaviors of your rabbit and his dates. We **look for positive signs** such as indifference, grooming, eating together, non-aggressive mounting and relaxed body language. It is important to know when to **intervene when aggressive behaviors arise**.
5. At home, you must set up 2 **separate areas** for each rabbit. They should be able to see and smell each other, but not close enough to bite through their cages. You will **swap their litter boxes** and living spaces each day as they can get accustomed to each other’s scents. There will be poop wars!
6. **Neutral territory is a must for dates at home!** Once you bring a second bunny home, the dates must continue in an area that has not been marked by your bunny - we suggest the bathtub or the back seat of a car.
7. **End each date on a positive note.** If the bunnies get too frisky or aggressive, calm them down and then end the date. Be mindful of circling and chasing, as it can escalate very quickly.
8. **Extend the time of each dating session.** Once the buns can be together without any spats, try leaving them alone for several hours, then overnight.
9. **Remain calm and patient** throughout the process, or the rabbits will pick up on your anxiety. Expect a few road blocks - we always say: “two steps forward and one step back.”

*It takes time and patience, but in the end,
there is nothing sweeter than 2 buns in love.*

