

RABBIT CARE & HANDLING

Online resources: <http://rabbit.org/> and <http://www.oxbowanimalhealth.com/>

Behavior Characteristics

- ✓ They are 'prey', **stress easily**, particularly sensitive to surroundings, smell and noise.
- ✓ If they panic, and held incorrectly, they are extremely susceptible to breaking their own back if they kick out.
- ✓ Normal respiration is fast.
- ✓ Do best with ambient temp of 85.
- ✓ They are unable to vomit.
- ✓ Heart Rate 120-150 beats per minute
- ✓ Respiratory Rate 30-60 per minute
- ✓ Temperature 101.0-104.0

Recognizing Illness

- ✓ Runny eyes, crusty nose, dried snot on arms.
- ✓ Little to no stimulation, they don't react.
- ✓ No poop, no pee.
- ✓ Pinch nape of neck to check hydration recovery.

Housing Needs & Care

- ✓ House where noise is low.
- ✓ If caged, cover with sheet providing good air circulation, cut holes in sheet if necessary; if a fan is available, use it.
- ✓ If in carrier, cover with blanket to provide 'security'.
- ✓ Bedding – do NOT use shavings!
- ✓ Preferred bedding – straw hay, shredded paper. These materials allow permit them to burrow.
- ✓ Do NOT put any type of cloth inside cage/carrier/box!

Feed

- ✓ May not want to eat, can go 3 days without food without problem.
- ✓ Must **always** have water (lick bottles, bowl). Can put ice in water.
- ✓ Free feed
- ✓ Provide choices to see what they will consume -- timothy hay, oat hay, commercial rabbit pellets, vegetables, fruit. Refer to the above websites for specific information.
- ✓ Toys – sticks, material that will not splinter.

Cleaning

- ✓ Do **NOT** remove night feces. They must eat this material.
- ✓ Do **NOT** use strong odor cleaners!
- ✓ Hot water and dish soap are preferred, and, are the safest. Rinse thoroughly, probably THE most important step in cleaning.