

Rabbits &



Small Furrries

Rabbits

Rabbits are very social animals and can make fantastic pets. Although they are small they still require adequate housing, time to play, companionship, lots of love, care, exercise, fresh water and food every day and regular veterinary treatment.

Diet

Rabbits should graze on fresh grass and/or good quality fresh hay. Concentrates (pellets), vegetables and fruits (carrots, apples, cauliflower leaves, and cabbage) should be no more than 10% of the daily diet. They can also be given fresh dandelions and clover (make sure they have not been sprayed with anything toxic and didn't grow too near a road and that they have not been contaminated by dogs). Grass lawn mowings and more than the occasional lettuce leaf may cause diarrhoea so should be avoided. Water should also be freely available.

Neutering

There are many benefits of neutering your rabbit. Neutered female rabbits can live a longer, healthier life as the risks of cancer and urinary tract infections are greatly reduced. Secondly, a rabbit that is neutered often becomes calmer and easier to manage.

We recommend neutering for all rabbits, male and female, before the age of 6 months. It can be done as early as 16 weeks of age providing the weight of the rabbit is over 1kg. It can take up to 4-8 weeks for a male rabbit to become completely sterile post neutering.

Worming

Rabbits can be affected by several different parasites. The main types of worm which affect your rabbits are roundworms and tapeworms. Heavy worm infestations can cause sickness, diarrhoea, weight loss and weaken your rabbit's immune system. It is therefore important to treat your rabbit on a regular basis to get rid of any worms it may have picked up. The worming programme will be based on your rabbit's lifestyle.

Vaccination

Rabbits can contract one of two possibly fatal infectious diseases: Myxomatosis and Viral Haemorrhagic Disease (VHD). You can protect your rabbit from both of these with a combined vaccine. Rabbits can be vaccinated from 5 weeks of age. It takes about 3 weeks for the immunity to develop and your rabbit is then protected for about one year. After the primary vaccination your rabbit will then need a booster vaccination every year for both diseases.

Flystrike

Flystrike can occur when flies lay their eggs on rabbits. These eggs then hatch into maggots that eat the rabbit's flesh. The flies are attracted by soiled or wet fur, often around your rabbit's rear end or any wound or cut. Sadly, flystrike causes serious pain and suffering and it can be fatal.

The main things to do to prevent flystrike are to keep the hutch clean, change the bedding daily and use good absorbent bedding. Once a week, completely empty the hutch and disinfect with a disinfectant suitable for use with small animals. Check your rabbit once, or better, twice daily.



Small Furrries



Guinea Pigs

Guinea pigs are very social and should be kept in pairs of the same sex. They are better kept indoors in a large cage with areas to hide and space to run around. The bedding should be a 2-5cm deep layer of clean wood-shavings or shredded paper, with soft hay or straw on top. Guinea pigs like good quality fresh hay. Concentrates (pellets), vegetables and fruits should be an occasional treat.



Chinchillas

Chinchillas are very lively and active animals. They need lots of space ideally, in a tall cage with different levels made out of hardwood and with thick floor bedding, some wood to chew on and a sand bath (chinchilla dust) available at all times. Their diet consists of fresh hay and fresh water as well as additional chinchilla grass pellets over winter. They may have some root vegetables, leafy green vegetables or dried fruit as occasional treats. Do not feed nuts or seeds.



Ferrets

Ferrets are very inquisitive and display a variety of playful behaviour. Their living space needs to be big enough to match their active life style. They can be trained to use a litter tray. As ferrets are strict carnivores they need a well-balanced meat based diet and fresh drinking water at all times. They should all be neutered. Ferrets are susceptible to Canine Distemper, a 99% fatal disease, and should be vaccinated against it.



Hamsters

Hamsters love to keep themselves busy with tunnelling, rearranging the bedding, running in an exercise wheel, sniffing, ambling and eating. Hamsters also seem to be masters at hiding and escaping, so keep them in a secure habitat and take care whenever you let them out to play. Hamsters need to eat hamster food, as an occasional treat they can also have seeds, grains, fruits, greens and insects or other forms of protein. Always provide fresh and clean water. Good vegetables for hamsters are: a small piece of lettuce, chicory, endive, cauliflower, cucumber and broccoli. Good fruits for hamsters are: a small piece of apple, pear, peach, melon, berries and banana.



Rats and Mice

Rats and mice are intelligent, highly social animals. Clean out the cage when they are awake, as disturbing their sleep can be stressful for them. When cleaning out the cage, leave a handful of unsoiled clean nesting material behind to keep some familiar smells within the cage.

Provide constant access to fresh clean drinking water. Scatter portions of their daily food allowance around the cage to encourage foraging behaviour. Grapes/raisins, chocolate, citrus fruits, onions, rhubarb and walnuts are poisonous.



To learn more about caring for your pet as well as the services we offer at Wingrave, visit our website

 www.wingravevets.com

Follow us:

 Wingravevets1