


# The Basics

A Reference Guide for  
New Fosters and Adopters



 Orlando Rabbit  
Care & Adoptions



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## Am I ready for a rabbit?

If you have never owned a rabbit, you may find that they are a lot more work than you might expect. Rabbits can live 10–12 years with proper care. Their diet is strict, and they need daily exercise and socialization. Rabbits can be wonderful house pets, but you need to know what to expect before bringing one home. Things to consider are

- the activity level of your home,
- the ages of your children,
- the other pets that live in the house,
- the number of hours you spend away from home.

Rabbits prefer a gentle, quiet living environment. Consider the noise level of your environment before fostering or adopting.

## Children and Rabbits

If the decision has been made to move forward with fostering or adopting a domestic rabbit, and you have children, below are some common myths about children and rabbits.

### MYTH 1: RABBITS LOVE TO BE CUDDLED AND HELD.

Rabbits rarely conform to the cute-n-cuddly stereotype in children's books and on TV. They are fragile animals that often become scared when picked up. Younger children are still developing fine motor skills, which can often cause them to pick up a rabbit incorrectly or hold them with too much pressure. Improper handling can cause the rabbit to kick and struggle to escape, risking injury to the rabbit or child. Since rabbits typically do not like being held, it can be challenging for your younger children to interact with them. Proper adult supervision is required.

### MYTH 2: RABBITS MAKE GREAT STARTER PETS FOR CHILDREN BECAUSE THEY DO NOT REQUIRE A LOT OF SPACE.

Rabbits require an enclosure that is a minimum of eight square feet and should have at least three or four hours of free roam time a day. They should never live in cages or hutches, as those enclosures are too small, and they should **NEVER** live outdoors.

### MYTH 3: MY CHILD WILL BE ABLE TO CARE FOR THE RABBIT SOLELY.

A rabbit's primary caregiver should always be an adult. The novelty of a new pet can wear off quickly, resulting in improper feeding and improper observation of their eating habits. Rabbits have specialized diets that require a lot of attention. Rabbits need regular brushing, nail trims, daily cleaning of their enclosure, and daily observation of their eating patterns to catch potential medical concerns. Children alone cannot perform many of these requirements.



A rabbit should be a family pet, not just a child's pet. You know your child's personality better than anyone and can determine whether your child may become bored with a rabbit because they do not interact with children as a dog or cat would. We recommend that a child who wants a rabbit as a pet be at least seven years of age or older.

Ultimately, having a rabbit is much like having another child—a toddler. It is essential to consider the life that each family member deserves, and this includes rabbits. Rabbits can be beautiful additions to the family, but only when the family is ready and the environment is right.

## Other Pets and Rabbits

Can rabbits be friends with dogs or cats? Yes, with some patience and the right personality of all animals involved, rabbits can become friends with dogs or cats. Rabbits who are good candidates for a canine or feline friend are

- 1 outgoing,
- 2 confident,
- 3 relaxed,
- 4 easy-going.

Traits that make dogs and cats good candidates for a rabbit friend include

- 1 **LOW** prey drive,
- 2 follows basic commands well,
- 3 calm and submissive attitude,
- 4 adult age (puppies and kittens are too rambunctious).

### *Introduction Tips*

Never allow a dog or cat to meet a rabbit that is not inside an exercise pen. Allow the dog or cat to explore the outside of the pen while the rabbit is inside the pen. For dogs, it is best to have them on a leash during introductions for quick corrections. Holding a cat in your lap is a safe way to allow them to feel secure while giving you control if the introduction does not go as planned.

Once you feel comfortable, you can put the dog in the exercise pen while the rabbit gets to free roam to see how they respond. Keep sessions short and gradually extend them. Proceed slowly, do not jump into the second meet and greet by letting the animals free roam, even if they seemed to get along the first time. Watch for any aggressive or chasing behaviors.

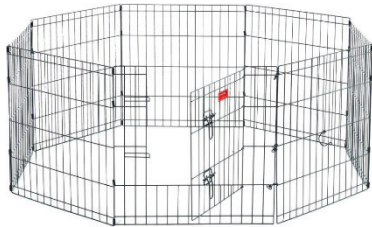
Once they are friends, **always supervise interactions**, even if they are getting along. Always feed in separate areas and never allow your dog or cat to chase your rabbit, even during play.

Never allow your rabbit near a cat litter box that contains clumping litter. Clumping cat litter is dangerous to rabbits, as they are likely to ingest it. Ingesting it will cause a deadly intestinal blockage. You can use kiln-dried pine litter for both your rabbit and cat.



## Housing

Your rabbit will need specific items to live safely in your home. Indoor rabbits prefer to have their personal space, just like humans. They do not need a large area, a 4ft. x 4 ft. pen works best. Free roaming is still necessary for a rabbit to get exercise and stay fit. They do need a space to call their home.



**Exercise Pen**



**Low Pile Carpet 4x6**



**Garage Floor Foam Tiles**

The equipment you see above is ideal for house rabbits. If you have a rabbit that likes to jump, a sheet placed over the top of the pen usually deters this behavior. If the rabbit continues to jump out of the pen, a metal frame top can be purchased from Midwest™. This only works in the square configuration. Again, no cages or hutches are recommended.

Floor coverings are also important. A rabbit needs traction to hop. It is essential to have rugs around your home and in the pen if you have tile or wood flooring. Rabbits can develop splayed legs if they cannot get a grip with their paws.\* Types of appropriate flooring include

- 1 garage flooring tiles,
- 2 low-pile carpet,
- 3 nonslip pieces of linoleum,
- 4 rubber flooring.

\* Slick surfaces in the home can put the rabbit at risk of developing a splay leg. Signs of splay leg are a limb out the side of the body, or it does not hop like an ordinary rabbit.

## The Scary Outdoors

Often we are asked why we do not permit our rabbits to be kept outdoors. House rabbits are precisely that—house rabbits. They are not wild and are not bred to be outdoor pets. House rabbits are susceptible to botflies, fleas, ticks, fly-strike, scabies, ear mites, and many other issues (see page 3).

**Can I Walk My Rabbit on a Leash - Mary Cotter and Amy Sedaris (rabbit.org)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MZHqYd8ddI4>





**Ear Mites**



**Fly Strike**



**Bot Fly Hole**

We cannot emphasize enough the importance of keeping a house rabbit indoors. They cannot withstand the Florida heat. They cannot protect themselves from predators, and we have many. Wild animals in Florida are in every neighborhood and backyard. Keep your rabbit safe—**INDOORS**.

## Daily Diet Requirements

A rabbit's daily diet consists of unlimited access to fresh timothy hay and water. They should also receive fresh vegetables, high-quality pellets, and the occasional treat. Typical adult daily feeding should consist of

- 1 eighty percent timothy hay,
- 2 2 to 4 cups of leafy greens,
- 3 ¼ cup of pellets per 4 to 8 pounds of body weight.
- 4 **Fruit is not recommended for house rabbits.** Sugary treats, which can cause GI stasis, are not necessary to a rabbit's diet.

Rabbits under 6 months of age should be fed

- 1 unlimited amounts of alfalfa hay,
- 2 unlimited young rabbit pellets.
- 3 Introduce fresh greens at 12 weeks of age in lesser amounts.

**HAY!** Hay is an essential part of a rabbit's diet. Without hay, rabbits are subject to illnesses such as GI stasis (to be discussed later), tooth problems, and early death. They need unlimited access to fresh hay 24/7. Listed below are a just few of the reasons why hay should be 80% of your rabbit's diet:

- 1 It helps rabbits maintain a healthy weight.
- 2 It helps keep their constantly growing teeth trimmed.
- 3 It promotes a healthy gut.
- 4 Creating interactive toys with hay encourages natural behaviors such as foraging.



## Types of Hay

High quality hay is essential for rabbits. Types of hay can vary from a pet store to a farm store. Good hay should be green and smell fresh; it should not feel like straw. Your rabbit will eat more hay if it is of better quality.

Rabbits need unlimited access to fresh hay and it should make up 80% of their daily diet. Hay helps promote a healthy gut, files teeth down and reduces hairballs and other blockages. There are several different kinds of hay a rabbit can eat. Changing your hay choices and brands can encourage picky eaters to start munching and can sometimes reduce allergy symptoms for humans and bunnies.

| Type                            | Description  | Uses  |
|---------------------------------|--|---|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> Cut Timothy Hay | High in stem, low in leaf; long stiff pieces   | Great for rabbits who struggle with GI Stasis or teeth issues. Helps to wear down teeth and since it is lower in fat, helps to maintain weight. This hay is high in fiber and low in fat and protein.   |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> Cut Timothy Hay | Flexible stem with medium leaf   | This type of hay has the perfect blend of nutrients and is the primary choice of hay for most rabbit owners.  |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> Cut Timothy Hay | Darker green mixed with brown; softer pieces   | This type of hay is great for picky eaters, tooth problems, mouth pain or for bunnies that need to gain a bit of weight. This hay is ultra-soft and leafy.  |
| Orchard Hay                     | Thicker blade and softer and lower in protein than Timothy Hay   | Great for bunnies and humans who have allergies to other hay types, as it produces less dust than other hays. Also a great hay for picky eaters or to fight hay boredom.  |
| Oat Hay                         | Yellowish in color and has some oat attached to long stems   | Great for humans and bunnies suffering from allergies to Timothy Hay. This hay will entice even the pickiest of eaters and can be helpful if your bunny needs to lose a little weight.  |
| Botanical Hay                   | Blend of fragrant herbs mixed with Timothy Hay   | This type of hay can stimulate your rabbit's appetite for hay. Can be eaten alone as a treat or mixed with other hays to create an appetizing long strand fiber meal.   |
| Alfalfa Hay                     | High in fat and calories and has three times as much calcium as other hays. Considered a legume type of plant in the pea family, not grass like other types of hays. | Used for young growing rabbits. At the direction of your vet, it can also be fed to adult rabbits in small amounts recovering from surgery due to its high protein level. Feeding too much alfalfa to an adult rabbit can be harmful and cause serious health issues. |





## Pellets

Pellets should make up about 5% of your rabbit's diet. As with any food, not all pellets are equal in quality. Pet stores stock their shelves with foods that promise to be "gourmet," "premium," "improve dental health," "fortified with vitamins," or contain "all-natural ingredients." Do not be fooled by flashy advertising. Superior quality timothy hay-based pellets are all your rabbit needs. You should avoid commercial pellet food brands with seeds, fancy colored pieces, dried fruit, corn or oats, artificial ingredients, or brands that list added vitamins or minerals. If you are feeding your rabbit a healthy diet focused on hay and fresh greens, they do not need added vitamins and minerals.

You will find articles arguing the true benefit of pellets in a rabbit's diet. Rabbit owners and even vets are split on the issue. If you choose to feed a lower quality of pellets, you must replace the nutritional value lost by increasing the vegetables you provide. Consult a rabbit-savvy vet about the best diet plan for your rabbit.

## Vegetables

Vegetables are known as "greens" to most rabbit-savvy people and are crucial to your rabbit's health. However, the KIND of vegetables is just as important as the quantity. The list below is not all-inclusive, but the list of what NOT to feed your rabbit is significant to its health. Rabbits have a delicate digestive system, and anything that could upset that system is dangerous to their health.

Feed a variety of these daily:

- Alfalfa sprouts
- Arugula
- Basil
- Carrot tops
- Celery (cut into small pieces)
- Cilantro
- Clover and clover sprouts
- Dandelion greens and flowers
- Dill
- Endive
- Escarole
- Green leaf lettuce
- Red leaf lettuce
- Green peppers
- Lemongrass
- Mint leaves
- Oregano
- Parsley
- Radicchio
- Radish tops
- Romaine lettuce (NEVER Iceberg)
- Rosemary
- Sage
- Turnip greens
- Thyme
- Watercress
- Wheatgrass
- Yellow squash
- Zucchini squash

The following foods should not be offered more than once per week. **Kale and spinach are high in calcium, which rabbits do not need.** If given in high quantities over an extended period of time, it may cause kidney problems in the future.

- Beet tops
- Bok choy
- Broccoli leaves and stems
- Kale
- Mustard greens



Foods that are high in carbohydrates and sugar can cause gas in rabbits. Instead of giving fruits and carrots to your rabbit, you should give them decent quality treats.

### **NEVER FEED THESE TO YOUR RABBIT**

- Avocados
- Bread
- Cabbage
- Chocolate
- Cookies
- Crackers
- Cereals
- Corn
- Iceberg lettuce
- Nuts
- Onion
- Pasta
- Raw potato or skin
- Rhubarb
- Seeds
- Sugary treats
- Yogurt drops

These items and other human “treats” can cause intestinal problems, including a toxic overgrowth of “bad” bacteria in the intestinal tract. Beware of “rabbit treats” sold in stores. They may include seeds, nuts, corn, or too much sugar. If you grow your own herbs, make sure the herbs are NEVER sprayed with pesticides or treated with any repellants sprayed from lawn maintenance companies.

## **Water**

Rabbits drink a lot of water. Unlike other small animals, rabbits should not drink from bottles hung on the side of a pen. A water bottle forces a rabbit to tilt its head in an unnatural way to drink. Bottles are difficult to clean thoroughly, which can make it easier for algae and bacteria to grow. In several cases, rabbits have gotten their lip or tongue stuck under the ball, resulting in extremely painful injuries to their mouth and even death.

Bottles are not an acceptable option to provide your rabbit with water. Ceramic bowls, gravity water dispensers, or bowls that can attach to the side of the pen make an excellent option for your rabbit.



## Litter Boxes

Rabbits like to spend a lot of time in their litter box, munching on hay and doing their business. Yes, they poop while they eat. There are many types of litter boxes available for purchase and it is important to consider your rabbit's personality and needs before buying one.

Boxes should have **NO** wire grates—rabbits have very sensitive paws, and this type of flooring can cause sores and infections and require the rabbit to sit in an unnatural position (plastic grates are acceptable).

The box should be large enough for your rabbit to turn around in and lie down if they wish. If the box is too small, they will not use it. They do not have to be pretty; a simple under-bed storage bin can make a great litter box.

**ALWAYS** put hay in the litter box. You can place it on top of your rabbit's preferred litter (never use cat litter) or place your litter box under or next to your rabbit's hay feeder. This encourages rabbits to use their litterbox.

Two are better than one. If you have a free roam rabbit or notice your rabbit having consistent accidents in the same spots, place a litter box where they are going. Height is important. If the sides are too short, your rabbit might have a few accidents over the edge of the box or might be smart enough to know it can reach the hay from outside of the box. You want to force it into the box to eat the hay. Look for litter boxes with a minimum of 4-inch sides (except in the case of senior rabbits).



**Standard or High Side Litter Box**



**Low Front Litter Box  
(for senior or injured rabbits)**



**Bad litter box**



## Types of Litter

There are several litter options for your rabbit; each has different absorbency, odor, and costs. Use our comparison chart below to help you decide what is right for you and your rabbit. The most common types of bedding include paper, paper pellets, and kiln-dried pine pellets.

Paper bedding expands so you can use less; it is absorbent, helps control odor, and is easy to find at most pet stores, but it is more expensive than other options.

Paper pellets absorb liquid quickly, control odor, are easy to find at most pet stores, and are affordable. **CAUTION:** Any paper pellet litter that contains baking soda is NOT ACCEPTABLE. Baking soda causes acute respiratory issues in rabbits.

Kiln-dried pine bedding is a preferred litter material. It is highly recommended by rabbit owners, is very inexpensive, absorbs quickly, and controls odor. Pine pellets can be purchased at a feed store or a pet store. **CAUTION:** Do not purchase wood stove pine pellets that contain any type of accelerant such as those used for fuel. These can be deadly to rabbits.

**DO NOT USE** clay or clumping cat litter that can be accidentally ingested by rabbits. This can cause digestive issues that may lead to death. Keep your rabbit well away from any cat litter boxes in your home that contain this type of litter. Softwood shavings contain phenols and can cause liver and respiratory damage in rabbits. Scented litter or bedding has chemicals that are not good for a rabbit. These chemicals can cause respiratory issues.

## The Scoop on Poop

Rabbits poop A LOT! That is one of the first things you will learn as a new rabbit owner. Luckily, healthy rabbit poop consists of dry, scentless, cocoa puff-sized balls that are easy to clean up, especially if your rabbit is litter box trained. Poop can tell you a lot about the health of your rabbit. Illnesses are often detected early by watching for any changes in the size of their poops or pooping habits.

## Normal Rabbit Poop Characteristics

Healthy rabbit poop can range from about the size of a green pea to a chickpea. The size of the rabbit does not correlate to the size of the poop. Rabbit poop looks like little round balls. Some distortion may occur when extra fur is ingested and expelled in their poop. The color of normal rabbit poops can range anywhere from a deep brown to a tanner wheat color. Rabbit poop should be dry and hard to the touch, not soft and squishy. Rabbits poop about two hundred to three hundred pellets a day due to their high fiber diet. If your rabbit goes 12 hours without pooping, contact your vet. This can be a sign of early GI stasis symptoms.



## Cecotropes

Get ready for a bit of a gross-out moment. Cecotropes, or cecal pellets, are a nutrient-rich dietary expulsion that rabbits produce and consume daily. It is visually different from fecal matter because it resembles a blackberry composed of small soft, shiny balls. You should not usually see these, as your rabbit will typically eat cecotropes as they are expelled. However, a diet too high in carbohydrates, sugar, or protein can upset the balance in the cecum and cause an overproduction of cecotropes. In this case, a rabbit may ignore these extra droppings as they do not require them. If your rabbit's poop changes dramatically in size, shape, color, or texture, please see a vet immediately as there may be a severe medical condition requiring treatment.



## Grooming

Yes, it is necessary to groom your rabbit. Rabbits need grooming/brushing to remove excess fur, but you **should not** bathe your rabbit. Rabbits do need their nails trimmed regularly.

## Shedding

Rabbits shed on average every three months. They do groom themselves, but need regular brushing to help remove excess hair. If a rabbit ingests too much hair, severe digestive issues leading to GI stasis may result. Grooming your rabbit is also an excellent time to bond with your rabbit. Rabbits have extremely sensitive and thin skin. You will want to be very gentle and use the right tools. Below are two of the brushes we suggest.



**Hair Buster**



**Furminator**



## How-to-Videos

If you need a visual example of grooming a rabbit, hop on to the links below for some great grooming tips and examples.

### How to Groom Your Rabbit by House Rabbit Society

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5w4knbRoD2E>

### My Rabbit's Grooming Routine by 101 Rabbits

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hL78-fmflWE>

### Do Rabbits Shed by House Rabbit Society

<https://rabbit.org/do-rabbits-shed/>

Some rabbits need more help with grooming. If you are uncomfortable with trimming your rabbit's fur, specialized groomers can help. Below are some rabbit-savvy groomers in Central Florida.

### The Pampered Pooch – Samantha Schupsky

3377 Forsyth Road, Winter Park, FL 32792

(407) 720-7165

### BGE Grooming

379 E. Broadway Street, Unit 1004, Oviedo, FL 32765

(407) 801-1243

## Nail Trimming

Rabbits' nails can grow to be exceptionally long and sharp if not trimmed regularly. Overgrown nails will curve and cause the rabbit to walk/hop unnaturally, resulting in arthritis, loss of the nail, or more severe injury down the line. Rabbits have eighteen toenails, four on each of their back feet and five on each of their front feet. Just like cats and dogs, rabbits have a vein in their nail called a quick. You need to avoid this area when clipping your rabbit's nails. Rabbit nails need trimming every six weeks.

This process can be terrifying for a rabbit, and they will often kick or try to break loose from your hold. Putting your rabbit in a "bunny burrito" will help alleviate the struggle. Having a second person hold the rabbit or clip the nails may help. Use a flashlight to locate the quick on a dark-colored nail. If you are uncomfortable trimming your rabbit's nails, your local rabbit-savvy vet or groomer can trim them for a small fee and will often give you some tips on how to do it at home.



## How-to-Videos

If you need a visual example of how to clip a rabbit's nails, hop on to the links below for helpful tips and examples.

### **How to Trim Your Rabbit's Nails by House Rabbit Society**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W9KemnaTGIs>

### **How to Trim a Rabbit's Nails by 101 Rabbits**

<youtube.com/watch?v=rvausPZOJ5A>

## Teeth

Rabbits' teeth grow their entire lives. A healthy diet of hay and suitable chew toys will wear down their teeth naturally. However, some rabbits are prone to dental issues. If you notice any of the following, you should take your rabbit to the vet for a checkup:

- drooling
- swelling
- weight loss
- bad breath
- aversion to petting on the facial area
- tooth grinding while eating

**If your rabbit is experiencing any of the above concerns, contact your veterinarian for instructions on what to do next. DO NOT WAIT.**

## Toys

Toys are an essential form of enrichment for rabbits. They help fight boredom, help trim their teeth, and offer a fantastic way to bond with your rabbit. Look for toys that encourage natural rabbit behavior, such as chews and items they can toss, run through, hide in, or dig in.

Check your rabbit's toys regularly to ensure there are no small or loose parts that could cause a choking hazard. Small wooden balls or small wooden items are not recommended.



## Medical Care

It is vital to have some first aid materials on hand in case of an emergency. We always hope that nothing will ever happen, but it is best to be prepared.

- You should have a vet's number and address.
- Keep a variety of small animal oral syringes on hand. You will need these to administer medications or Critical Care.
- Oxbow Critical Care™ or another nutritional recovery product is highly beneficial. These are supplements you syringe feed your rabbit to help when they are recovering from surgery or experiencing GI stasis. Keep this in the freezer to prolong its shelf life.
- Baby gas drops (Simethicone) help relieve gas.

**NOTE: A vet must prescribe the ONLY flea and mite medication recommended by vets for rabbits. DO NOT use any over the counter medication for a rabbit. A dose of incorrect medicine can cause death.**

## Gastrointestinal Stasis—Silent Killer

GI stasis is one of the most common problems in house rabbits. This condition requires immediate attention and or veterinarian care. You need to understand the symptoms, the signs, and the steps to treat and prevent this condition.

**How to Help a Rabbit with Gas Pain - Mary Cotter (rabbit.org)**

**VIDEO - Bunnies and Gas - Tummy Massages**

<https://youtu.be/LbyC6CWbm5M>

### SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- No apparent interest in eating
- Lethargy
- Not drinking water
- Few or no new fecal droppings
- Bloated or distended abdomen
- Lying like a loaf with little movement
- Rapid breathing
- Appearing distressed
- Teeth grinding
- Very noisy gut sounds or no gut sounds
- Diarrhea

### TREATMENT

**Quick action on your part can make a life-saving difference. You first need to recall the last time you saw your rabbit eating. Time is of the essence, as a rabbit can die within 24 hours if it has not eaten.**

If you cannot get to your veterinarian quickly (evening, weekend, holiday, etc.), you must try to stabilize your rabbit. Below are the steps you need to take immediately to relieve your rabbit's pain and encourage eating.

- 1 Tummy massages are one of the most beneficial ways of stimulating a lazy gut. Place a towel on a table or countertop, then place the rabbit on their stomach, and gently massage the abdomen moving your hands side to side in the same direction. (Please watch video link below before trying massage.) Tummy massages are recommended every 30 to 60 minutes.





- 2 Simethicone (baby gas drops) are available for purchase at any grocery store in the infant section. This can help to break up the gas bubbles. A five-pound rabbit can have 1cc every 2-1/2 – 3 hours; adjust according to the rabbit's weight.
- 3 Syringe feeding of water is needed as the rabbit may be dehydrated. Syringe feed your rabbit up to twenty-four ounces of water every 2-1/2 – 3 hours. This can also help stimulate their digestive tract.

Nutritional recovery products, like Oxbow Critical Care™, can also help your rabbit get through GI stasis by jump-starting its digestive tract. Mix one teaspoon of the product with three teaspoons of warm water and give it directly to the rabbit with an oral syringe. These products are available at the vet's office, pet stores, and online; it is recommended that you keep some on hand. Keep unused Critical Care in the freezer for long-term storage.

After feeding Critical Care, wait a few hours. If your rabbit still does not eat, give it another dose. You can also massage your rabbit's tummy during this time to help break up the gas bubbles.

In summary, gas and GI stasis are preventable with a diet high in fiber (timothy hay and greens) and low in carbohydrates and sugar. Lots of leafy, green vegetables and decent quality green hay (hay should never look yellow like straw) and plenty of fresh water and exercise are essential components to avoiding GI stasis. Observe your rabbit for changes in appetite, activity level, and fecal output. Your rabbit's life might depend on it! **IF YOUR RABBIT HAS NOT EATEN IN 12 HOURS, DO NOT WAIT. TAKE YOUR RABBIT TO A VETERINARIAN IMMEDIATELY!**

## What is RHDV2?

RHDV2 is a deadly disease that infects domestic and wild rabbits. There is no cure. Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Virus 2 kills rabbits in 1 to 5 days after infection. It is HIGHLY contagious to other rabbits, and there is no treatment.

In case of an outbreak, you need to institute pre-emptive measures to protect our domestic rabbits. Keep pet rabbits indoors. Remove shoes outside of the house. Wash your hands, clothes, shoes, etc., before caring for your rabbits. Sanitize outdoor gear. Please refer to our website for the proper way to sanitize your items. Do not handle or consume meat from dead or sick wildlife. Do not allow pets to encounter ANY dead wildlife or domestic animal. Do not fly personal birds in areas where there is a report of RHDV2 cases. REPORT dead animals to the appropriate agency.

**Wild Rabbits: Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission – 866-293-9282**

**Domestic Rabbits: Division of Animal Industry – 850-410-0900**

A vaccine is now available and offered by select exotic veterinarians. Please contact your local exotic veterinarian to inquire about the vaccine.

## Finding an Exotic Veterinarian

Exotic? Yes, domestic rabbits are “exotic pets.” As such, they require specialized care that not all veterinarians are qualified to provide. You should carefully screen a veterinarian before making an appointment. It is important to establish a relationship with a vet prior to emergencies, annual check-ups are recommended. Please contact our local rabbit rescue for a list of exotic pet vets at [info@orlandorabbit.org](mailto:info@orlandorabbit.org).

