

# Bunny Basics Reenies Rabbit Rescue two page guide

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- **RABBITS AREN'T CATS OR DOGS. DON'T EXPECT THEM TO ACT THAT WAY. BUT, THEY DO REQUIRE THE SAME LEVEL OF CARE.**
- **BUNS CAN NEVER BE WITHOUT HAY/FOOD/WATER.** Rabbit digestion needs to be always working. If not, they might die. If bun stops eating for more than a few hours, or has diarrhea (which can be lethal), or is acting a bit off... don't wait, get them to a vet ASAP. Don't feed old, rancid pellets—your bun can die. If you must buy more than two months of pellets at a time, freeze them or store in cool, dry place.
- **THEY SHOULD GET FRESH GREENS DAILY. NEVER ICEBURG LETTUCE OR CORN**—it can kill them. Fruit is a nice treat. They can eat tiny amounts of crackers and yogurt. Click your tongue when giving treats and they will learn to come. Buns are capable of learning their name.
- **THEY NEED LOTS OF FRESH WATER.** They drink tremendous amounts of water for their size. A HEAVY CROCK that can't tip over, or one that attaches to the wire IS THE BEST primary water source. Drinking from a hanging bottle is like trying to sip water from a dripping faucet.
- **SALT/MINERAL BLOCK:** Buns lick these to fill nutritional voids. Use the best food you can afford. [NaturalRabbitFood.com](http://NaturalRabbitFood.com) is outstanding.
- **ALWAYS PROVIDE HAY:** Feed as many varieties as you can. Timothy Orchard Grass are great for all ages. Alfalfa is ONLY good for under 6 months, pregnant, nursing moms, or senior. Avoid alfalfa for other buns—it's high in calcium. Hang wire hay rack over litter box for best results.
- **LARGE AMOUNTS OF:** Lettuce (NOT ICEBURG), Basil, Grass, Tree Leaves, Cucumbers, Green Beans, Dill, Carrot Tops, Most Weeds, Dandelions, Fennel, Chamomile, Mint, Zucchini, Tomato, Turnips, Watercress, Cucumber, Kohlrabi, Beans, Fennel, Lilac, Tulips, Cilantro, Swiss Chard, Parsley, Lemon Balm, Chamomile, Echinacea, Marigold Flowers, Marjoram, Nettle, Oregano, Rosemary, Sorrel, Nasturtium, Thyme and more...
- **MEDIUM PORTIONS:** Spinach, Kale, Mustard Greens, Cabbage, Beet Greens, Cauliflower, Radish Tops, YOUNG Sprouts, Broccoli, Beetroot, Artichoke Leaves, Asparagus, Carrot and more...
- **SMALL PORTIONS:** Dried Fruit, Raisins, Uncooked Fruit including: Pineapple, Orange Segments, Apple, Pear, Carrot, Watermelon, Banana w/ Peel, Peach, Mango, Papaya, Cherries w/out Pits, Plum, Melon, Star Fruit, Currants, Nectarine, Apricot, Kiwi, Raspberry, Strawberry and more...
- **VERY SMALL TREAT-SIZE PORTIONS :** Breadsticks, Cheerios, Yogurt Raisins. Visit [HOUSERABBITSOCIETY.ORG](http://HOUSERABBITSOCIETY.ORG) for treat ideas and more!
- **NEVER:** Iceburg Lettuce, Corn, Onion, Evergreen Tree, Most Houseplant, Leek, Chive. Avoid roadside grass that may be sprayed or polluted.
- **PREVENTATIVE MEDICINE:** Like us, the more varied the diet, the healthier they are (not counting pellets). To avoid picky eating, introduce a variety of hay, veggies and fruits early on. But if in doubt—don't let them eat it! Don't feed wet leaves or leaves that are becoming spoiled. Buns have delicate digestion and are hypersensitive in general. Wild buns communicate in a sophisticated and subtle way. The best way to figure out if there's something up with your bun is to get in the habit of daily observation. Just be still and watch them, listening to their sounds, hanging out. You could even take their temp so you know what's normal for them. When something goes wrong, you will easily spot it.
- **FOR THEIR TEETH, BUNS ALWAYS NEED STICKS TO CHEW ON.** Rabbit's teeth never stop growing and chewing is nature's way of keeping them filed down. They love sticks from the woods but will also chew old magazines, scrunched up paper bags, real wine corks, baskets, wood blocks. Stuff hay and a couple raisins in a toilet paper roll. Rotate their toys out as they get bored easily. They love an old bookshelf to climb on and chew. They love ramps and hiding in cardboard boxes. Turn an old wooden drawer upside down and they will climb on top. They enjoy cat balls and bells, and some are able to use cat beds too. Carpet remnants make an ideal resting spot on a slippery floor.
- **THEY WILL CHEW ELECTRICAL WIRES.** Pick them up, tape them up, or put them in plastic or metal tube covers sold at the hardware store. Neurotic buns will chew wood furniture, rugs, molding, doors, ect. Energy healing does help calm neurotic buns down and alleviate their chewing, contact us for an Animal Healer reco. Hot peppers, such as the habanero, cut open and rubbed on the area being chewed also helps. Use caution here: Do not let the juice touch you or bun. Place a stick near the area they have been chewing to give them a new option.
- **BUDDHA BUN:** Buns want peace—talk to them softly. They enjoy soothing music, played very low. They also like a night light, as they frighten easily. They respond well to energy healing for issue resolution. A lightly spritzed lavender essential spray provides a calming aroma.

- **SPAY & NEUTER YOUR BUN:** Accidents happen! Buns are always fertile, unlike most other mammals whose fertility is cyclical. It takes five seconds to have an unwanted litter. Spaying/neutering also helps with behavior issues like aggression and urine marking. It also prolongs their life. Roeders Ark, Otisville, NY 845-386-8700 Spays/Neuters rabbits, pigs, rats, etc \$75! [www.HouseRabbitSociety.org](http://www.HouseRabbitSociety.org) lists other leads.
- **BUNS NEED SPACE TO EXERCISE.** They need a minimum of a small pen inside a house. A wire cage is not a suitable habitat for a bunny. Their feet do not have pads like dogs and cats and the wire is painful to them. At the very least leave cage with the door open and a fence set up around the cage and attached to the cage. Buns can roam free. If your bun will be free-roaming, introduce the space to them slowly. We find that a good way is to close bun up at night and allow them to roam freely by day. PetSmart & Petco have good X pens. Tractor Supply sells a nice 36" x30" tray, several of which can be clipped together and fence put around. This is good for those buns still mastering the litter box.
- **BUNS HAVE FRAGILE BACKS WHICH CAN BREAK EASILY.** Take great care when handling a bunny. Pick up and hold its bottom as if you were holding a baby. Do not let them kick their legs back. Swaddle them. Do not let them hang in the air—in nature that means they are about to get eaten! Never pick up by their ears. Buns love interacting with you on their level. Get down on the floor and let them come on your lap. Whistle lightly to prepare them for being picked up. Buns can be trained with sounds. Click your tongue when giving treats, they'll come.
- **BUNS CAN BE LITTER-BOX TRAINED.** Some are better than others but most are trainable. More than one box per bunny is recommended. Many buns will keep one box as their "dry" box or lounge area, and use the other as their "wet" box or potty area. They will eat their litter so avoid cat litter and cedar bedding, it's toxic. Place food/hay over box so bun has to be in box to eat. If that doesn't work, add a second box with no food or hay over it. Wipe up accidents, placing tissue in box so they get the idea. Placing the urine of another bun in box will also induce them to use it. A wire grate over box sometimes helps or try wee wee pads. Placing hay or treats in box can help. Pick up poops outside the box and place in box. Rearranging the room with the box in a different spot helps when all else fails. You might also try changing the type of litter. Clean accidents up with a non toxic, cruelty-free ([leapingbunny.org](http://leapingbunny.org)) cleaner to remove scent as best as possible. A mini broom/dustpan is your best friend. Some buns take months to completely grasp the concept. The Nesquik Bunny says "Patience is a Virtue."
- **FOR OUTDOOR BUNS:** In nature, rabbits never stop moving and they burrow deep into the ground (think Allison in Wonderland's "down the rabbit hole"). Therefore they need space and access to the earth to be happy. A hutch must be enclosed within a larger pen so they have free-range run around. It must also be reasonably well insulated. Rabbits can die in the cold if not properly housed. Like chicken coops, hutches can be heated. It can also be covered w/ styrofoam. Just remember that buns will chew whatever you put in their space so make sure they cannot eat it. They now sell pre-insulated hutches and "rabbit hutch covers" on amazon. At the very least, block the sides with plastic sheeting and stuff it w/ straw (not hay!). For summer, make sure bun has enough shade—they do not do well in the heat. They dehydrate quickly and can die. Predators include fox, coyote, hawks, raccoons, weasils and some cats. Hawks swoop down and scoop them up; weasils dig holes under the fence. Make sure buns have a safe place to hide and their home is secure from predators. Buns can get fleas. If your bun is indoor/outdoor, be careful not to bring fleas inside. Holistic flea spray (at pet stores) and Revolution are preventatives. Revolution is the only chemical preventative that won't kill bun, though some have died from it, mainly of the Dutch breed. [Joespetmeds.com](http://Joespetmeds.com) is a trusted source.
- **BUNS CRAVE COMPANY:** You have your family, friends, school, job, etc. YOUR PETS HAVE ONLY YOU! That's why they should have a companion. Buns are not solitary creatures, but highly social animals. Include them in your human family whenever possible. Buns are super intelligent and having a companion will help alleviate boredom and help keep them from getting into trouble. A small dog, cat or guinea pig can make a suitable companion if two buns is out of the question. But two buns are as easy as one to care for—and the sight of them together will melt your heart. Get a friend of the opposite gender to bond—but make sure they are both fixed! Litter mates usually bond easily regardless of gender. Bonding depends on the personality of bun. [Thetahealing.com](http://Thetahealing.com) helps difficult bonding situations. Contact us for a recommendation.
- **GROOMING:** Flea combs are great. So are regular people combs. Shedding brushes (round metal blade) also work well for removing excess fur. Nail trimming is very easy, google or take to groomer. Genital pockets may also be cleaned if you are feeling adventurous. Always check your bun's ears to make sure they are ear mite-free. Feel them regularly to check for abnormalities. Unlike cats, rabbits cannot throw up. It is believed that pineapple, papaya or papaya wafers help reduce hairballs. Bathing bun is not recommended, spot clean when necessary.
- **MEDICAL ATTENTION:** Normal bun temp is 101-103 F. Single, dry to slightly moist poops are normal. A random clump of wet, small poops are OK. Buns must eat their own Cecotrope (a form of poop) to stay healthy. If bun stops eating, or hides when they normally don't, or has diarrhea, they are sick! Buns have a short window of time to recover from any illness—rush them to a vet. Local bun-friendly vets that we know of are: Hamptonburgh Animal Hospital, Monroe Animal Hospital, Flannery Animal Hospital, and [www.HouseRabbitSociety.org](http://www.HouseRabbitSociety.org) for other leads.