

BUNNY BASICS by *Reenies Rabbit Rescue*

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- Buns require the same level of care as dogs or cats, although they're very different. Like any pet, they should have proper diet, housing, annual vet visits w/ a FECAL TEST. Daily clean up is required. Buns naturally dislike being held and aren't teddy bears! They can bite! You'll need to earn their trust by spending time with them. What you put into your rabbit is what you get out of your rabbit. They love watching TV and soft music is calming. Buns are fragile—handle with care.

- SPAY/NEUTER: Very important to spay/neuter your bun! Fixing your rabbit relieves hormonal urges, reduces urine odor, improves potty skills, lessens grunting, biting, humping, pacing and chewing. It also reduces the risk of cancer which is high for rabbits. Low cost spay/neuter rabbit clinics: roeders ark 845.386.8700, westchester humane 914.632.2925

- Buns can NEVER be without HAY and WATER: Bun's digestive tract needs to be moving at all times. Hay is 80% of diet and should always be available day and night. Using a hay rack keeps the hay clean. AVOID alfalfa hay. NEVER leave a big bowl of pellets out! LIMIT pellets to approx 1/4-1/2 cup daily depending on bun size and metabolism. If bun fills up on pellets they will lose interest in hay, and ABUNDANT hay eating is CRITICAL to gut health and teeth. Hay is nature's nail file for their teeth. NEVER feed pellets with colored pieces, seeds, corn and fruit. A variety of dark leafy greens should be given daily. Provide twigs or wood to chew. If you see poop stuck to bun's butt, that is NOT NORMAL and indicates a poor diet. If this occurs, reduce pellets, withhold fruits and treats, offer limited leafy greens with a variety of hay. If bun stops eating, pooping or acts "off," they're sick! Take them to a vet immediately as buns can die quickly from not eating (stasis).

- Buns love fresh water every day. A large, ceramic, flat bottomed dog bowl is best. Drinking from a bottle is like sipping from a dripping faucet which may prevent rabbits from being adequately hydrated.

- GOOD GREENS to feed: Lettuce, arugula, escarole, endive, swiss chard, cucumber, pepper, bok choy, mustard green, pumpkin, fennel, dill, mint, cilantro, oregano, rosemary, thyme, sage, basil, beet tops, carrot tops, radish tops and more.

- BAD FOODS: NEVER feed iceberg lettuce, lettuce starting to go bad, lawn mower grass, roadside or treated grass, corn, oak, pine, spinach, peas, celery stems (the leaves are OK), cabbage, broccoli. No breadsticks, cheerios, yogurt raisins, oats, or store-bought rabbit treats filled with artificial colors, preservatives, etc.

- NO MORE THAN ONCE PER WEEK: parsley, kale.

- EDIBLE WEEDS & FLOWERS: knapweed, fleabane, daisy, ragweed, thistle, chicory, chamomile, echinacea, smartweed, marigold, pansy, lavender, nasturtium, violet, morning glory, plantain, dandelion, goldenrod, lemon balm, knot weed, jewelweed, yarrow, heather, foxglove, rose, woodsorrel, pennywort, yarrow, wild carrot, all varieties of grass.

- EDIBLE TREES: sugar maple, norway maple, silver maple, willow, birch, apple.

- FRUIT can be given OCCASIONALLY as a special treat: Pineapple, orange, beet, apple, tomato, pear, carrot, watermelon, banana, peach, nectarine, plum, mango, papaya, cherries, melons, kiwi, raspberry, strawberry, grape. EXCESS sugar or too many pellets can cause digestion PROBLEMS.

- BUNS NEED TO CHEW! Their teeth never stop growing. Overgrowth is a common problem with symptoms that include drooling, wet chin or an unwillingness to eat hay and greens. If this occurs a vet check up is necessary. Encourage hay eating and chewing with fresh twigs from outside (see safe list above) and rabbit chew toys such as willow balls.

- BUNS LIKE FRIENDS: A spayed/neutered companion will alleviate boredom and curb anxiety. They will groom and snuggle each other. Other pets such as dogs and cats can make suitable companions but only on a case by case basis. Introducing a friend involves a "bonding process."