



So, you think you'd like to get a low-maintenance, starter pet for your child (or for yourself). Bunnies don't require a lot of care or attention, plus they are so cute and cuddly, right? Wrong!!!

Bunnies don't always make the best pets for kids. They can live 10-12 years, hardly a starter pet. Help and guidance from the adults in the family will be required. Bunnies are messy, bossy, and sometimes, rude. They are also sweet, comical, and great pets!

If you are still thinking about adding a bunny to your family, please take a moment to understand some of these basic bunny needs. The House Rabbit Society (HRS) has a ton of great information on their website. You can find a list of bunny savvy vets in your area on their site; Educational videos on everything like grooming, health issues, and behavior; and a list of healthy and unhealthy foods.

Visit the House Rabbit Society at [www.rabbit.org](http://www.rabbit.org) and like their page on Facebook.

### Your Bunny's Daily Diet



#### Hay

Hay should be 80% of a bunny's diet. They need fresh hay daily for their teeth and to keep their insides working properly. Any variety of a grass hay, like Timothy, is best for bunnies over 6 months. Alfalfa should be used for bunnies under 6 months and then need weaned off.

#### Pellets

If you are going to feed your bunny commercially made rabbit food, make sure it is Timothy based and has at least 18% fiber in it. A lot of our bunny friends prefer Oxbow or Sherwood Forest brand food. Most bunnies should only have about 1/8 cup, two times a day.



#### Fresh Vegetables

Fresh leafy greens and non-leafy vegetables are also important for a bunny's diet. Fruits should be used sparingly. A full list can be found on the House Rabbit Society website.

#### Water

Bunnies need access to fresh water at all times. Most bunnies prefer to drink from a heavy crock type bowl. Bottles are messy and hard to keep clean. You may need to try your bunny's bowl in a couple of places to keep him/her from making a mess. I started out by putting Suzie's large bowl in a small litter box. At least it contained her mess.

### Bunny Health

- You will need to find a bunny savvy vet. Not all vets work with bunnies, as they are very fragile.
- Bunnies need to be spayed or neutered. This will help with aggression, litter training, and the prevention of certain types of cancers.
- Keep infants' gas relief, Simethicone (dye-free), on hand at ALL times. Visit the HRS site for a full list of items to keep in case of an emergency.
- Bunnies need to be brushed, but never bathed. They groom themselves, like cats, but they cannot throw up like cats. Brushing will help prevent with blockages. This is another reason why hay and water is so important to your bunny's diet.
- Your bunny's claws will need clipped, so his/her feet don't become painful to walk. A vet tech can show you how to do this properly.
- Bunnies don't like to be picked up, it can cause them stress. In the wild, they are prey animals. So, instead, try getting down on their level and let them check you out.

#### Housing

A small cage is not enough space for a bunny. They need to run and stretch their legs, just like any other living being. Most bunny parents use a puppy X-Pen to house their bunny. Amazon often has them on sale. I use a 36" tall one for Suzie. Put something down on your floor, to protect it. Don't spend too much time setting it up, your bunny will rearrange it anyhow. In the bunny world, this is known as "bunstruction."

#### Litter Box

I use Feline Pine cat litter in the bottom of the litter box and then cover it with fresh hay daily. You don't have to dump the box daily, just add fresh hay on top. Do NOT use regular cat litter.

I often sprinkle a few of her pellets or vegetables at one end of the box. She likes to dig around for her food. It keeps her busy and me entertained! A busy bunny is a happy bunny.

**Bunnies should NEVER eat nuts or seeds!**