



**ANIMAL CARE AND WELL-BEING
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:**

RABBIT



Q. Can I feed the rabbit my food?

A. No, it's not good to feed rabbits food that their owners do not know about. Just as with other animals, or even people, certain foods might make them sick.

Q. Why do some of the rabbits have colored water?

A. The colored liquid is a sports drink mixed with water. This provides the rabbit with extra electrolytes, something important for its health. This helps the rabbit cope with the new and different surroundings while away from home.

Q. Why do some rabbits have frozen water bottles?

A. Just as people get warm in the summer, so do rabbits. Some owners choose to put frozen bottles in the cage to help keep the rabbits cool as they rest against them.

Q. Does the wire floor hurt their feet?

A. No, it shouldn't under most circumstances. Rabbits are comfortable on wire. Wire flooring is more sanitary than any other form of flooring because it allows *urine* (pee) and *feces* (poop) to drop below the cage floor.

Q. Why are some of the rabbits losing their fur?

A. Rabbits, like many birds, go through a *molting* phase in which their fur falls out. This natural process happens every year both seasonally and at various stages of life. Heavy molting usually takes place at the end of summer allowing the rabbit to grow a thicker coat for the winter to keep it warm in colder temperatures. Molting can vary from breed to breed and even from rabbit to rabbit.



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Q. Why does that rabbit have floppy ears? Are they broken?

A. No, that is a *lop-eared* rabbit. Several breeds of lop-eared rabbits naturally have ears that do not stand up. Some breeds, such as the French Lop, Holland Lop, Mini Lop and American Fuzzy Lop, have a ridge of cartilage called a *crown* that pushes their ears down. English Lop rabbits, the original lop-eared breed, do not have this crown. The English Lop rabbit has ears so big and heavy that they fall on the sides of its head!

Q. Why does that rabbit have red eyes? Are their eyes bleeding or hurt?

A. Rabbits with red eyes and white fur are *albino* rabbits – they are not bleeding or hurt. Albino animals lack *melanin*, a substance that gives living things different colors. All animals have melanin, including humans. It determines skin, eye, hair and fur color. Lacking melanin is normal but rarely happens in most wild animals.

Q. What are these rabbits used for?

A. Rabbits can be used for many things. Rabbits are great pets! Rabbits are also shown at county fairs or other national clubs and shows. Some rabbits are raised for fur or for meat.

Q. How can you tell if your rabbit is sick?

A. It can be hard to tell if rabbits are sick because they are *prey* animals, which means other animals called *predators* hunt them for food. If they were in the wild and showed signs of being sick or injured, predators would quickly find them. By watching carefully and knowing how a rabbit normally behaves, you will learn to tell if it is sick. A sick rabbit might stop eating, have fewer or no *fecal* (poop) droppings, be less active or interactive, or display a change in posture. If something seems off or different about a rabbit, take it to a veterinarian right away.

Q. How do you properly pick up a rabbit?

A. You can pick up a rabbit by placing one hand under the rabbit’s stomach and the other hand behind the rabbit’s back. Then pull the rabbit into your body to help it feel secure and safe. Remember to always first ask the owner before petting, picking up or touching any animal at the fair.



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