Nibbles Rodent & Rabbit Rescue
www.nibbles.org.uk
Reg Charity No. 1068657

Our Guide to



Feeding Your Rabbits

The Basics of a Rabbit's Diet



Rabbits rely on a high-fibre diet to stay healthy.

A healthy diet keeps their teeth naturally worn, their digestion active, and their bodies working just as nature intended. With the right balance of hay, fresh foods and limited pellets, rabbits can avoid painful dental spurs and other potentially life-threatening problems.

This leaflet will help you understand what and how we should be feeding our rabbits to keep them happy and healthy throughout their lives. The good news is that once you know what they truly need, it's really easy to provide.



Together we can improve the welfare of pet rabbits and help promote a happy, healthy life for the nation's third most popular pet.

Why Hay is so Important

Hay is the foundation of a rabbit's diet, providing the fibre needed to keep their digestion active and teeth naturally worn. Offer a constant supply of clean, good-quality feeding hay such as timothy, meadow, or orchard. Avoid dusty hay and very short, chopped hay, as this reduces chewing time and can affect dental health. Rabbits should always have access to a fresh pile of hay around their own body size each day.

Hay should make up 80–90% of what your rabbits eat. Provide it in several areas, including their litter tray, and replace it daily to keep it clean and appetising. Mixing different hay types or offering fresh grass adds natural variety and encourages grazing throughout the day.



Commercial Rabbit Feeds



With so many available - what should you choose?

Bright, colourful muesli mixes may look appealing, but they aren't healthy for rabbits. These mixes are often high in sugars and low in fibre, which can upset the digestive system and lead to poor dental health. Rabbits tend to pick out the tastier pieces — known as selective feeding — which prevents a balanced diet. Choosing a quality pellet helps ensure every bite provides the same balanced nutrition and supports good gut health. Look for pellets that list grasses or hay as the first ingredient and have a high fibre content. Offer around 15 g per kilogram of body weight each day — roughly one tablespoon for an average rabbit. Pellets should make up no more than 5% of the daily diet, complementing unlimited hay and a selection of fresh plants and herbs.



Fresh Foods



Rabbits enjoy a variety of fresh foods, which should make up 5–15 % of their daily diet. Fresh forage such as hand-picked grass and safe weeds is ideal — never feed mower or strimmer cuttings.

Good wild choices include dandelion, long-leaved plantain, cleavers, and herb robert, plus raspberry, apple, and hazel leaves. Ensure plants are clean and free from pesticides.

From the supermarket, choose herbs like parsley, coriander, and basil, along with rocket and romaine lettuce. Avoid brassicas such as kale, cabbage, and similar greens, as gentler options are better for digestion.



Treats



Carrots might be a traditional favourite, but they're best kept as an occasional treat due to their high sugar content. Offer just a small piece once or twice a week. A thin slice of banana or strawberry can also make a tasty occasional treat.

Dried forage such as plantain, nettle, or dandelion is a much healthier option. Sprinkle it through hay to encourage natural foraging behaviour — it's something rabbits can enjoy every day.



Avoid treats containing seeds, grains, dairy, or honey, as these can cause digestive problems. Natural plant-based treats are always the safest and most rewarding choice.

Teeth, Tums, and Bums



Teeth - A good diet is the foundation of healthy teeth. Rabbits' teeth grow continuously, so they need plenty of long-strand hay and fibrous foods to wear them down naturally and keep them comfortable.



Tums - A fibre-rich diet keeps the digestive system active and healthy. When rabbits eat the right balance of hay, fresh foods, and pellets, their tummies stay busy and their overall health thrives.



Bums- A balanced diet helps prevent an excess of caecotrophs — the soft droppings rabbits re-eat directly from the anus for essential nutrients. Eating these is perfectly normal, but uneaten droppings can become messy, and in warm weather they can quickly attract flies, increasing the risk of flystrike.