

Rabbit Nutrition

Never let a rabbit go without hay. They should always have an ample supply of timothy hay available. Hay provides the much needed fiber for their digestive tract. Other grass hays (oat hay, orchard grass) also provide a large amount of fiber, but these can be more difficult to find. A lot of fiber means firmer poop, fewer furballs, and an overall healthier pet.

Alfalfa hay is only a treat. Alfalfa contains too much calcium, protein, and carbohydrates, which can lead to obesity, kidney and bladder stones, and gastrointestinal upset. Alfalfa may be fed to pregnant, nursing does, post-fracture rabbits and young rabbits.

Pellets are not a necessity. Although most bunnies love their pellets, it should be offered only as an added supplement to their diet. Timothy hay pellets (versus the common alfalfa hay pellets) are preferred, and should only be given in small amounts based on the pet's ideal weight. Give a maximum of ¼ cup pellets per 4 pounds (1.8 kg) of body weight daily if your pet is not overweight. Just remember that feeding too many pellets can lead to obesity and dental problems.

If your pet is under 6 months old, pregnant, or nursing, alfalfa hay may be fed during these situations to provide your pet with the extra calcium, protein, and carbohydrates for growth and development. After your pet reaches 6 months of age or when the female weans her young, stop giving the alfalfa hay.

Greens are a must. Feeding a variety of leafy greens along with the unlimited hay prevents boredom and provides essential nutrients. Greens should be introduced into the diet slowly so as to not irritate the rabbit's gastrointestinal tract. If a rabbit hasn't had a certain green before, offer only a couple of strands the first few days. After that, you can increase the amount daily. Below is a list of greens that are good for bunnies.

Kale
Cilantro
Parsley
Red leaf lettuce
Carrot, Radish or Celery tops
Grass
Spinach
Greens (mustard, turnip, collard, dandelion)
Green leaf lettuce
Basil
Spearmint
Romaine lettuce
Endive
Arugula

No pesticides! It is very important to purchase organic fruits and vegetables (no pesticides) and rinse dirt/debris off before feeding to your rabbit.