

VetSmiths

More than just vets

RABBITS

Nutrition

As with any new pet, educating yourself and becoming aware of good nutrition will benefit your new pet hugely throughout its life.

Hay

Rabbits require a diet rich in fibre. A good quality timothy hay or fresh grass should make up 85% of your bunnies diet. Hay or grass should be made readily available 24/7 and should be replenished with fresh hay as and when needed and certainly every day. An easy guide on how much your bunny should eat is to aim for a pile of hay the same size as your rabbit every day.

Unfortunately, rabbits can be quite fussy on what hay they find tasty. There are many shops/farms/online suppliers that provide excellent quality hay, so trying as many different ones as you can until you find one your bunny will eat is worth the effort. Good hay-eating habits, can assist in reducing the chances of dental disease in rabbits later in life, so getting this part of the diet right in the early years will pay off hugely .

Pellets

Good quality dry pellets can be fed alongside hay as a way of getting more vitamins and minerals into your rabbit's diet. These pellets should only make up a small amount of your buns diet and should not be fed ad lib. A good guide is to feed one egg cup of pellets per bunny, per day.

Remember, hay is the food your bunny should be eating the most of.

When shopping for the best dried food for your rabbit, you may come across *muesli* style foods marketed at rabbits. These contain lots of tasty looking, colourful ingredients. These may look appealing (to your rabbit), but are not recommended due to their high sugar and starch content. They basically hold no nutritional value for your rabbit. Muesli style feeds are a little bit like us humans eating a bag of pick and mix.

The best pellets to go for are the traditional brown coloured nuggets – these are high in fibre and contain all the essential vitamins and minerals your bunny needs. For instance, Burgess Excel make a good quality pellet and are worth investigating.

Fresh greens and veg

A variety of fresh greens and veg should be fed daily to your bunny to fulfil his nutritional requirements.

Again, these should be limited to a cupful, per rabbit, per day. Keep remembering that the hay is the most important part of the diet.

There is a huge variety of greens and herbs that are suitable for bunnies, like:

- Kale
- Spinach
- Rocket
- Parsley
- Coriander
- Carrot tops (the green bit)
- Dill
- Romaine lettuce
- Basil

There are some foods that are not suitable or could be hazardous to rabbits, so before introducing new foods always check out that they are safe before giving them.

Please note: the above information is a general guide and shouldn't be used instead of veterinary medical advice or diagnosis. If you are ever concerned about your pet, you should seek immediate advice from your vet.

