

# Your New Rabbit

## – a guide to its care.

Congratulations on the new addition to your family. This is an exciting time for everyone and we hope that you will have many happy years together. This handout covers some of the basic facts about keeping a rabbit. Please read it carefully; if you have any further questions ask a member of staff.

### Suggested Feeding Guidelines

The easiest way to ensure a good level of nutrition for your rabbit is to feed a mixture of fresh grass and hay, supplemented with Burgess Supa-Rabbit rabbit food, on top of this you should feed it fresh vegetables - but not too many. You want your bunny to eat as much grass and hay as possible. Also, always make sure that your rabbit has a fresh supply of water to drink – remember water bottles will freeze in the winter.

### Vaccinations

Your rabbit should be vaccinated against Myxomatosis which is a serious and usually fatal disease. It is caused by a highly contagious virus, spread by fleas and mosquitoes. Myxomatosis vaccine can be given from six weeks of age and a booster given every six months.

Rabbits should also be vaccinated against Viral Haemorrhagic Disease [VHD]. This is given from ten weeks of age and a booster given yearly. Both vaccines should be given two weeks apart.

### Neutering

Neutering females at an early age is very important as it reduces the likelihood of developing uterine cancer, as well as aggression. Neutering males can reduce the likelihood of territory spraying and aggression. Rabbits can be neutered from six months.

### Insurance

Insurance for your pet is something we strongly recommend as veterinary fees can be expensive. Parkvets recommend Petplan who have a policy especially designed for rabbit owners.

### Dental care

Rabbits' teeth continually grow throughout their lifetime. In the wild they eat grass and gnaw twigs but in captivity dental problems frequently occur. To help with this ensure that your rabbit has plenty of grass, fresh hay, carrots and chew sticks.

If you find your rabbit has difficulty eating, a wet chin or is losing weight it should be checked by a vet ASAP.

### Fly Strike

Fly strike is common in the rabbit. It happens in hot and humid weather. Flies, attracted to a rabbit's bottom because it is dirty, lay their eggs. In as little as eight hours the eggs hatch out into maggots. The maggots feast on the rabbit's flesh causing tremendous pain and if left untreated, death.

Prevent this by checking the hutch twice a day to ensure it stays free from droppings. Hang a fly strip close to the hutch, or cover the front of the hutch with a net curtain. Check your rabbit's bottom twice a day to make sure it is clean. Parkvets also stock a product that will prevent fly eggs from hatching on your bunny and is easy to apply.

### Emergency Service

Parkvets has a vet on duty 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. In the event of an emergency, day or night, you should always telephone your usual Parkvets clinic and you will be given the appropriate information on what to do. Alternatively, call the emergency number 020 8300 8111

### And Finally

We hope that you will have lots of fun and pleasure from your rabbit over the coming years. We trust he or she will enjoy good health and to help achieve this we recommend a health review every six months with one of our vets.

Should you need further advice about the health or welfare of your rabbit then please contact us at the practice.

### Special Offer for Ruxley Manor Garden Centre Customers

For your peace of mind Parkvets have teamed up with Ruxley Manor Garden Centre to offer you a 10% discount on your rabbit's first health check up or vaccination course. Visit our website at [www.parkvets.com](http://www.parkvets.com) to find a Parkvets clinic near you.

You should obtain a voucher from Ruxley Manor Garden Centre and present it plus your receipt to Parkvets to claim your discount.



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GARDEN CENTRE

Parkvets

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Veterinary Hospital (020) 8300 8111

Belvedere (020) 8311 5250

Bexley (01322) 553456

Eltham (020) 8859 7914

Longfield (01474) 703377

Mottingham (020) 8857 2100

Swanley (01322) 665916

[www.parkvets.com](http://www.parkvets.com)