



A Compassionate Commitment to Quality Pet Care!

## RABBIT CARE INFORMATION

The information included in this Rabbit Care Kit was adapted from a handout provided by *The Rabbit House Society*, a nonprofit organization dedicated to rabbit care and owner education. We encourage anyone looking for a rabbit to adopt or seeking additional information to contact either the national or local chapter of this organization (*The Tampa Bay House Rabbit Society*) at their website: [www.rabbit.org](http://www.rabbit.org).

Rabbits make excellent pets. They are generally easy to care for and can even be litter box trained. The common domestic rabbit, *Oryctolagus cuniculus*, is a descendant of wild rabbits from Western Europe and Northern Africa. Rabbits are entirely herbivorous and actively forage in the dawn and twilight hours. Wild rabbits rarely stand their ground against threats, using their quick acceleration and speed instead to escape. However, domestic rabbits can show an amazing degree of aggression when upset or threatened.

The average life span for rabbits is 8 to 10 years, with a potential of 15 years. Males (bucks) reach breeding age at 6 to 10 months of age, and females (does) at 5 to 9 months. Pregnancy lasts 29 to 35 days, with an average litter size (kits) of 4 to 10.

Rabbit breeds commonly seen in North America as pets come from five broad groups, each with many species:

1. **Angora Rabbits:** English Angora, French Angora
2. **Lop Rabbits:** English Lop, French Lop, Holland Lop, Mini Lop
3. **Dwarf Rabbits:** Netherland Dwarf, Florida White, Polish
4. **Giant Rabbits:** Flemish Giant, Checkered Giant
5. **Miscellaneous:** Dutch, New Zealand, Chinchilla, Himalayan, Silver Martin, Rhinlanders

### RABBITS AND OTHER NON-RABBIT PETS

Rabbits can get along great with other pets – WITH CONSTANT SUPERVISION. Cats, dogs and rabbits sometimes become good friends. Contrary to expectations, the rabbit is often quite dominant over the cat. Careful control of your dog is necessary during early introductions. Ferret/rabbit and aggressive bird/rabbit combinations are not recommended.

### BUNNY COMPANIONS

Rabbits love the company of other rabbits. If you have one bunny, think about getting him/her a companion (males are usually only good with females, but females can be friends with males and females). The easiest combination to bond is neutered male/spayed female. The process of getting two rabbits to enjoy each other's company is called bonding. Mounting during bonding is common, but bonding should be stopped if one of the rabbits attacks the other.

### CHILDREN

Rabbits prefer gentle, quiet environments. Rabbits should not be kept as pets for young children or to teach a child responsibility. **Never, ever use the rabbits as a reward or punishment to get your child to act.** This may result in the child resenting the rabbit, and in some cases the child harms the rabbit when the adult isn't watching. And adult should supervise all child/rabbit interactions. Rabbits have a fragile bone structure and can be fatally harmed by a clumsy child. The rabbit's nervous nature and delicate digestive system make them unsuitable classroom pets.