



A Compassionate Commitment to Quality Pet Care!

RABBIT GROOMING

BENEFITS OF GROOMING

Grooming provides an excellent opportunity to give your rabbit a quick overall check-up (see Health Check handout). This includes checking the teeth for misalignment (malocclusion), the eyes and nose for any discharge, fur and skin for parasites and lumps/bumps, etc. Also check for mats and “poopy butt”. Rabbits have thin, sensitive skin, so use gentle strokes when brushing.

BATHING

Rabbits are naturally very clean and do not need baths unless they are incontinent (urine-soaked) or get “poopy butt”. Use plain water or a gentle, kitten safe shampoo, such as D-Basic. Many rabbits will squirm violently during bath, therefore only bathe the soiled area and have another person assist you, if possible. Towel-dry the rabbit and use a hairdryer (warm, not hot) if necessary.

SHEDDING

Because of their constant shedding, rabbits need to be brushed at least weekly to remove loose hair. You may have to brush daily during heavy sheds. Rabbits will shed in different ways. Some rabbits will take a couple of weeks or more to lose their old coat, while others will lose theirs all in one day. Much of the air can often be removed by gently plucking it out with your hands. Fine tooth “flea combs” made for cats work very well to comb out loose rabbit hair.

Bald spots on rabbits are quite common when they are shedding, but could be an indication of mites if bunny picks at the bald spots or you see dandruff-like flakes when the hair is pulled out. Consult your veterinarian if you are unsure.

ANGORA AND OTHER LONGHAIR RABBITS

These types of rabbits are truly wonderful to look at but REQUIRE MUCH MORE ATTENTION than shorthaired rabbits. They must be groomed daily to prevent matting of the fur and hairballs.

NAILS

Rabbits nails can grow to be very long and sharp and can be uncomfortable for both you and the rabbit. If the rabbit has light colored nails, the quick (the portion of the nail containing the blood) is highly visible making them very easy to trim – just clip the nail right before the quick. Dark colored nails make it much more difficult to see the quick, and therefore, harder to trim the nails. A scissors or guillotine-type nail clipper available from any pet supply store is suitable.

People are often afraid to clip the nails for the fear that they will cut the quick and draw blood. If bleeding occurs, it can be stopped by one of the following methods: apply flour to the area by dabbing it on with your fingers and applying pressure (the flour will help clot the blood); apply pressure to the nail with a cotton ball; or use a product called Qwik Stop which is available at most pet shops. Your veterinarian will also clip nails for you. They should be checked every 4 to 6 weeks. **NEVER DECLAW A RABBIT** – it is unsafe, inhumane, and is not recommended for rabbits.