

Myths about Rabbits

They are great for kids.

Rabbits are physically delicate animals which means they can be hurt by children picking them up. Because rabbits feel frightened when people pick them up, they kick and struggle which means children can also get hurt. Rabbits are also built to react to sudden changes which means they may either run away or try to bite when approached too quickly and too loudly. For these reasons, many children will find it difficult to interact with a rabbit and soon lose interest. As the adult, you need to get used to this idea: The rabbit will be your pet.

Rabbits are great, low-maintenance starter pets.

Their quarters need daily cleaning, fresh food and water must be offered daily, including a salad of dark-green leafy vegetables and unlimited grass hay. Pellets should be given in very limited quantities. Certain rabbit health problems can become chronic and can require regular (and sometimes expensive) veterinary treatment. Rabbits need daily monitoring. Problems that are relatively minor in some species (e.g. a day or two of anorexia) may be life-threatening in rabbits, and may require immediate veterinary attention.

Rabbits only live a year or two

Well cared-for indoor rabbits can live 7-10 years, and some live into their teens.

Rabbits do not need veterinary care the way dogs and cats do.

Although rabbits in the USA do not require annual vaccinations, nevertheless, regular veterinary checkups help to detect small problems before they become big ones. Companion rabbits should be spayed/neutered by veterinarians experienced in rabbit surgery. This not only reduces hormone-driven behaviors such as lunging, mounting, spraying, and boxing, but also protects females from the risk of uterine cancer, the incidence of which can exceed 50% as rabbits grow older.

Rabbits are happiest outdoors in a backyard hutch.

Rabbits kept outdoors in hutches are often forgotten and neglected once the initial novelty wears off. Far too frequently, they are relegated to a life of "solitary confinement" and are subject to extremes of weather, as well as to diseases spread by fleas, ticks, flies, and mosquitoes all of which can adversely affect their health and their life span. They can die of heart attacks from the very approach of a predator - even if the rabbit is not attacked or bitten.

Rabbits love to be picked up and cuddled, and do not scratch or bite.

Although some rabbits tolerate handling quite well, many do not like to be picked up and carried. If rabbits are mishandled they will learn to nip to protect themselves. If they feel insecure when carried they may scratch to get down. Unspayed/unneutered rabbits often exhibit territorial behavior such as "boxing" or nipping when their territory is "invaded" by the owner.

Rabbits do not require much living space.

Rabbits have powerful hind legs designed for running and jumping. They need living space that will permit them ample freedom of movement even when they are confined. Dwarf rabbits tend to be more active and energetic than some larger breeds, and require relatively more space.

They can be set "free" into the wild.

Domestic rabbits lack the survival instincts wild rabbits use to fend for themselves. So they become food for everything from raccoons and dogs to crows and hawks. And the "lucky" ones who don't get eaten get run over by cars or die from heat or disease.

More Information:

Websites:

House Rabbit Society
www.rabbit.org

The Bunny Bunch
www.bunnybunch.org



Books:

*House Rabbit Handbook:
How to Live with an Urban
Rabbit*
by Marinell Harriman

Why do rabbits make good house pets?

Rabbits are intelligent, social animals who need affection, and they can become wonderful companion animals if given a chance to interact with their human families.

Rabbits:

- are quiet
- can learn near-perfect litterbox habits
- are fun to watch
- have different personalities just as individual dogs and cats do
- don't need a yard if given plenty of indoor, sun-lit exercise space.

In addition, rabbits are social animals meaning they need the companionship of humans or other animals, although the need may vary among individual rabbits. They play, some more than others. Many can get along with most cats and some dogs when properly introduced. Many enjoy being with people but your family must have patience, understanding, and an acceptance of individual differences to earn their trust.



Basic Pet Rabbit Information

nhcrabbitrescue.com

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