



Dietary Recommendations

by Sandi Ackerman

A rabbit's diet should be made up of good quality pellets, fresh hay, (alfalfa, timothy or oat), water and fresh vegetables. Anything beyond that is a "treat" and should be given in limited quantities.

Pellets should be fresh, and should be relatively high in fiber (18% minimum fiber). Do not purchase more than 6 weeks worth of feed at a time, as it will become spoiled. Pellets should make up less of a rabbit's diet as he or she grows older, and hay should be available 24 hours a day.

When shopping for vegetables, look for a selection of different veggies (see sidebar). Look for both dark leafy veggies and root vegetables, and try to get different colors. Stay away from beans, corn and rhubarb.

Hay is essential to a rabbit's good health, providing roughage which reduces the danger of hairballs and other blockages. Apple tree twigs also provide good roughage, just be sure to let them dry for three months before given them to your bunny.

Babies and "teenagers"

- Birth to 3 weeks – mother's milk
- 3 to 4 weeks – mother's milk, nibbles of alfalfa and pellets
- 4 to 7 weeks – mother's milk, access to alfalfa and pellets
- 7 weeks to 7 months – unlimited pellets, unlimited hay
- 12 weeks – introduce vegetables (one at a time, quantities under 1/2 oz.)

Young Adults (7 months to 1 year)

- introduce grass and oat hays, decrease alfalfa
- decrease pellets to 1/2 cup per 6 lbs. body weight
- increase daily vegetables gradually
- fruit daily ration no more than 1–2 oz. (1–2 tablespoons) per 6 lbs. body weight (because of calories)

Mature Adults (1–5 years)

- Unlimited grass hay, oat hay, straw
- 1/4 to 1/2 cup pellets per 6 lbs. body weight (depending on metabolism and/or proportionate to veggies)
- Minimum 2 cups chopped vegetables per 6 lbs. body weight
- fruit daily ration no more than 2 oz. per 6 lbs. body weight

Senior Rabbits (over 6 years)

- If sufficient weight is maintained, continue adult diet
- Frail, older rabbits may need unrestricted pellets to keep weight up. Alfalfa can be given to underweight rabbits, only if calcium levels are normal. Annual blood workups are highly recommended for geriatric rabbits.

Good Veggies for Bunnies

alfalfa sprouts
basil
beet greens (tops)
bok choy
broccoli (mostly leaves/stems)
Brussels sprouts
carrots and carrot tops
celery (chop in small pieces)
cilantro
clover, clover sprouts
collard greens
dandelion greens and flowers (no pesticides)
endive
escarole
green peppers
mint
parsley
pea pods (the flat edible kind)
peppermint leaves
raddichio
radish sprouts, tops
raspberry leaves
romaine lettuce (no iceberg or light colored leaf lettuce)
watercress
wheat grass

Veggies to Give Occasionally

kale
mustard greens
spinach
Swiss chard

Special Treats

apple
bananas
blueberries
cranberries (dried)
grapes
melon
orange
papaya
peach, pear
pineapple
plums
raspberries
strawberries



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