



TREMAIN VETERINARY GROUP

Treating your pet like one of the family

Advice Note 14.0

Rabbit Husbandry Information

What is the best diet for my rabbit?

The best diet for rabbits is the one that closely mimics their natural diet of grass. It is of vital importance your rabbit is fed the correct diet to ensure a healthy dental and digestive system. The bulk of a rabbit's diet should consist of grass and good quality hay (i.e. Timothy) with a small amount of high fibre commercial diet.

Vegetables can be fed in small proportions on a daily basis to help prevent dental problems and behavioural associated problems. The type of vegetables that could be fed are as follows:

- Broccoli
- Parsley
- Cabbage
- Carrot (can be hung in the cage)
- Kale
- Dandelion (will need to be washed)

Fresh drinking water must always be available.

Hay can be fed in racks or nets to slow their eating down and prevent contamination of the bedding.

Pelleted foods are of preference to muesli type feeds to prevent selective feeding. A use of a food ball can also be of benefit.

What problems can be caused by feeding the incorrect diet?

Complications involved with feeding the incorrect diet are as follows:

- Obesity, possibly causing arthritis, matting of droppings, urine scalding and fly-strike
- Dental disorders due to lack of grass and hay as lack of fibre causes overgrown teeth.
- Fatal gastrointestinal problems can occur such as loose faeces and ileus when feeding a commercial diet low in fibre and high in carbohydrates, fat and protein.

How can I help to prevent my rabbit developing these problems?

Try to ensure the following:

- No sudden changes in diet
- Feed mainly grass and hay with a small proportion of commercial diet which is high in fibre low in fat, carbohydrate and protein
- Feed fruit only as an occasional treat as it can cause gastrointestinal problems.
- Use a feed ball, toys and hay net to prevent boredom
- Do not feed lawn mower clippings or mouldy/frosted food.

We recommend the Burgess Excel and Supreme Selective diets, which can be purchased from the surgery.