



Thinking of buying a rabbit?

Rabbits live 7-10 years or longer.

If the rabbit is for the children, they may leave home before the rabbit!

Did you know:

- Rabbits are social, active animals. Please don't keep a solitary rabbit in a hutch – this does not meet many of the fundamental needs of the species and results in a bored and distressed animal. Rabbits need companionship and the best pairing is two neutered rabbits of the opposite sex.
- Pet rabbits can live indoors or outdoors. Seek advice from books, the internet or specialist organisations when deciding how to keep your pet rabbit.
- Under the **Animal Welfare Act 2006** a pet owner has a legal duty to ensure the welfare of his animal(s). A pet's welfare needs include:
 - § A proper diet
 - § Somewhere suitable to live
 - § Any need to be housed with, or apart from, other animals
 - § Allowing animals to express normal behaviour
 - § Protection from pain, suffering, injury and disease

- **Outdoors**

Two or more rabbits, provided they are neutered to prevent fighting and breeding, can live in a permanent enclosure in the garden with suitable shelter, or share a hutch at night with daily access to a large, secure exercise run.

The Rabbit Welfare Association & Fund recommend a minimum hutch size of 6ft x 2ft x 2ft in addition to an area to exercise. A large wooden Wendy house with a secure run attached is a great way of providing for the rabbit's needs.

- **Indoors**

Rabbits can be trained to use a litter tray and live indoors. However, even after training and "bunnyproofing" some wear and tear on furnishings, and pet hair, is inevitable.

If you decide to buy a rabbit we would always recommend the following:

- Please consider contacting your local animal rescue/rehoming centre.
- Never buy a rabbit solely as a child's pet. Rabbits are rarely cuddly and may bite and scratch if they feel insecure.
- Consider the cost of veterinary care – vaccinations against VHD and myxomatosis, neutering and unexpected illnesses or injuries, and remember you will need to make provisions for care whilst you're away on holiday.
- “Starter kits” are only temporary homes for young rabbits. As your rabbit grows, be prepared to buy or build suitable accommodation – this may cost more than £100.
- Your rabbit will need regular supplies of quality food, hay and bedding.
- If you require advice, please call:

Rabbit Welfare Association & Fund: 0870 046 5249 or www.rabbitwelfare.co.uk

The Mayhew Animal Home: 020 8968 2341

Wood Green Animal Shelters: 08701 904090

RSPCA 0300 1234 999

