

Helpful Information on Determining Your Rabbit's Health And Ideas for Your Rabbit Emergency Kit

Rabbit Emergency Kit

These are good things to have on hand to care for your rabbit. Everything should be kept together in a box except for any antibiotics that may need to be refrigerated.

- Hand Sanitizer (for you)
- Kwik-stop, cornstarch, flour (stops bleeding)
- Antibiotics such as penicillin
- Worming medicine
- Vitamins (Such as Nutra Drench made for poultry or Linatone for fur)
- Emergency milk replacer (if you plan on breeding)
- Vanadine or other safe sanitizer
- Gatorade or other source of electrolytes
- Petramalt (hairball remedy)
- Wound disinfectant/antibiotic cream
- Paper towels
- Q-tips
- Tweezers
- Sharp razor blades
- Toenail clippers
- Several spare syringes and needles

Is Your Bunny Sick?

Below is a list of conditions which you may find in your rabbits. Not all of the following are symptoms of disease, some of them are normal for certain breeds or even colors. Use this as a guide to help you identify any diseases or conditions that may be affecting your rabbit(s). The chart provided with this handout will tell you more of the symptoms, the causes (which may help you prevent the same condition in the future), and tell you how to treat your animal(s). Also if you have any questions you can email howelhoneybuns@yahoo.com, this information came from them and they say they usually check email every day so you should get a relatively quick response.

Appetite Loss: **(1)** rabbits tend to eat less on very cold or stormy days, this is normal as they are not very active in bad weather. **(2)** appetite loss is a symptom of most diseases, it could be a sign that he has a hairball if he is also molting, an early sign of wry neck, poisoning, west Nile virus, snuffles, malocclusion, mastitis, and most other diseases.

Bloating/Pot bellied: a symptom of enteritis usually seen in young animals

Bloody Nose: can be caused by an injury, heat stress, or heat stroke

Blue Lips/ears: caused by a lack of oxygen and/or poor blood circulation, could be a

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sign of a heart condition or pneumonia

Chewing on Feet, etc.: usually a sign of great pain, the rabbit starts eating its own flesh and usually needs to be put down, Do Not confuse with fur chewing

Cloudy Eyes: cataracts in the eye(s) causing blindness; known as wall eye/moon eye

Damp Nose: a sign of stress usually from heat or traveling

Drooling: **(1)** a condition known as slobbers, caused by an infected tooth or improper feeding. **(2)** some rabbits get carsick and drool a little

Fur Chewing: can be a sign of irritation, can also be from insufficient feeding, or from poor quality feed

Goopy/runny eyes: milky discharge from the eye and often balding under the eye are symptoms of weepy eye

Green/Blue Fur: generally found on (but not limited to) the dewlap, green or blue fur is a symptom of green or wet dewlap, caused by fur being constantly wet, fur in affected area will in almost all cases fall out after a few days

Head Held Up: A sign of pain and/or labored breathing

Head Tilt: **(1)** most commonly caused by wry neck, there are 2 types of wry neck, to determine which type see the chart below this paragraph. **(2)** rarely, but sometimes caused by an injury, if that be the case it should heal and correct in a few days

Jelly/Blood in droppings: a sign of enteritis, most commonly found in young rabbits

Labored Breathing: could be from stress or a doe in labor, can also be a sign of pneumonia, or west Nile virus

Lopping Ear: one lopping ear that normally doesn't lop is often an early sign of one of the 2 types of wry neck, this one is an ear infection

Loss of balance: **(1)** a sign of wry neck, check the chart below to determine which type. **(2)** some loss of balance is normal on old rabbits, their legs just aren't as they used to be. **(3)** can be caused by west Nile virus

Lump(s): **(1)** usually an abscess, there will be fur loss on affected area when ready to break. **(2)** hard lump usually on the belly could be rupture. **(3)** small bumps on ears or face are usually scars from torn ears or bites. **(4)** large lumps on belly that will not fester could be cancer. **(5)** small to large lumps on head could be a symptom of myxomatosis/big head disease, carried by mosquitoes

Pulling Fur: does pull fur prior to kindling and will continue during the first week of the kit's age to keep them warm, if your bunny isn't pregnant she is having a false pregnancy and will stop within a few days

Red Urine: a condition known simply as red urine, caused by excessive calcium

Sneezing/coughing: **(1)** some sneezing while eating or drinking is normal, often they will get a little dust or water up the nose. **(2)** sneezing is a sign of borditella, and sneezing and coughing are signs snuffles and pneumonia

Swaying: many red eyed rabbits (whites and californian/himalayan marked) sway from side to side, this is somewhat common and not a health condition

Tooth Grinding: **(1)** loud tooth grinding usually means that the animal is in pain, can be a result of broken bones, poisoning, west Nile virus, and several other conditions.

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(2) loud tooth grinding can also be a sign of irritation. (3) soft tooth grinding is how a rabbit "purrs", much like a purring cat

Many people will tell you that when your rabbit is sick, or something just doesn't seem right, to take him to your local veterinarian. However part of 4-H is learning to prevent, identify, and treat diseases. Taking a rabbit to the vet may not be the best solution anyway, as a lot of vets have little to no knowledge of rabbits. Veterinarians who treat exotic animals charge a lot of money for that treatment. We have many breeders available to us who are wonderful resources for just about anything you may experience with your rabbit. It is however, a good idea to have the phone number of either an experienced rabbit breeder or knowledgeable veterinarian for advice or to lend a hand if you do need a little help, or if you have any questions you can email the rabbit breeders at the address listed above (howelhoneybuns@yahoo.com).

Treating Your Rabbit

This brief list should help you get started; you can learn much more from various rabbit disease books.

Treating your rabbit always starts with prevention. You can easily learn to prevent diseases and other harmful conditions by reading about what causes various diseases and by keeping your rabbits environment clean, out of the sun, and by keeping the water fresh and the feed stored in a dry place where mice can't get in and contaminate it.

Penicillin and Ivomec are pretty good answers to just about everything. Penicillin will cure practically anything caused by a bacterial infection and Ivomec will kill any and all parasites. **Dosages for treatments are as follows;**

Penicillin: 1/10cc per pound for juniors and small breeds, 1/5cc per pound for intermediates and seniors. Penicillin must be the injectable type, oral penicillins will kill your rabbit. Shots should be given intramuscular (IM), all rabbits should be given hay or straw after receiving penicillin, and no rabbit under 12 weeks of age should be given penicillin.

Ivomec: 1/5cc for small and medium breeds, 2/5cc for large and giant breeds. Shots should be given sub-Q (just under the scruff).