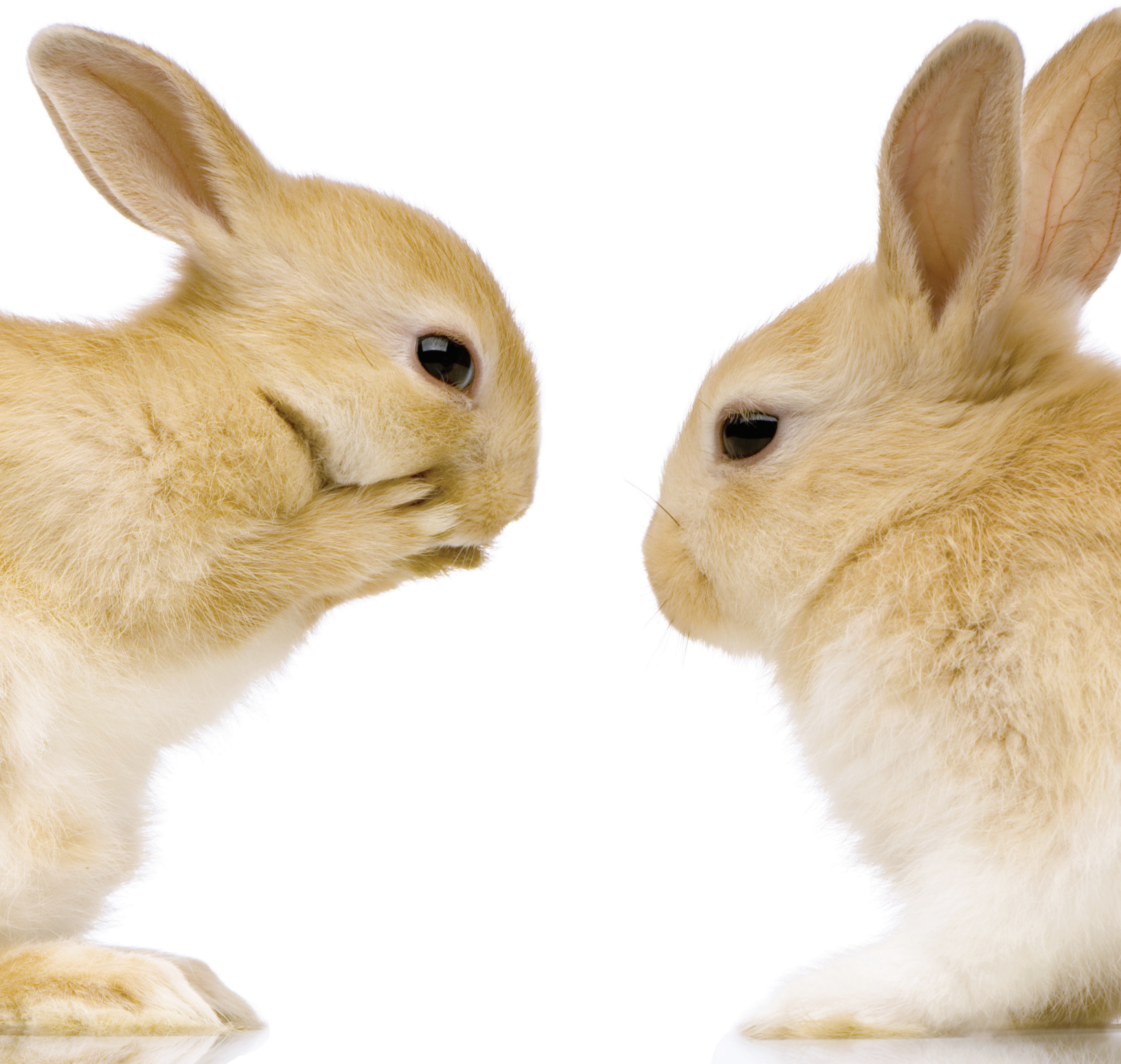




Groupe Vétérinaire MONVET Inc.

**RABBIT GUIDE**





# SURGICAL OPTIONS

## Sterilization

For females, this procedure is recommended between 6 and 9 months of age.

For males, this procedure can be performed as soon as the testicles have descended into the scrotum. We recommend however waiting until 5 months of age to reduce the risks associated with the anesthesia.

### ADVANTAGES :

- Prevents certain diseases such as uterine tumors (these develop in 50% to 60% of non-sterilized females), thickening of the endometrium (the inner lining of the uterus), mammary tumors and testicular tumors.
- Controls the population.
- Prevents certain undesirable behaviors such as aggression and marking.

## Laser surgery

For a few years now, the use of laser in performing a variety of surgical procedures has been strongly recommended. This technique yields many advantages when compared to the use of the scalpel blade. The laser:

- Reduces post-operative pain.
- Reduces bleeding.
- Reduces post-operative edema (swelling).
- Reduces the risk of infection of surgical wounds.

## Anesthetic safety

### PRE-OPERATIVE BLOOD TEST

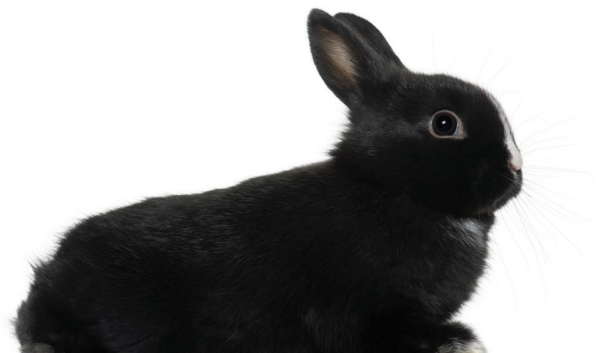
- Allows us to verify that the organs involved in metabolizing the anesthetic drugs are functioning properly.
- Helps to detect the presence of certain concomitant diseases often clinically unapparent which can increase the anesthetic risk.

### INTRAVENOUS CATHETER

- Ensures venous access at all times during the surgical period for the administration of medication and fluids. This is of particular importance in case of a drop in blood pressure or cardio-pulmonary arrest.

### INTRAVENOUS FLUIDS

- Helps to stabilize blood pressure in order to ensure proper perfusion of the major organs (heart, kidneys, liver, and brain) during anesthesia.
- Contributes to faster elimination of anesthetic drugs.
- Helps to keep digestive contents well hydrated, which promotes a faster return to an optimal digestive transit during the post-operative period.





# RABBIT'S NUTRITION

## Food

Your rabbit should always have free access to good quality hay. Timothy hay is preferred over alfalfa hay, which contains too much calcium.

A variety of vegetables can be offered daily at a rate of 1 cup per kg of body weight (rabbit's weight) per day. Green vegetables should be prioritized. It is important to introduce new vegetables one at a time, in small portions. Stop giving the new vegetable if it causes diarrhea.

Here are a few suggestions of vegetables you can offer: lettuce (Roman, cabbage or other, except Iceberg), celery with its leaves, peppers, zucchini, snow peas, chard, mint, coriander, parsley, carrot leaves, arugula, beet leaves, dandelion leaves, chicory, endive, broccoli flowers, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, spinach (in small amounts). It is important to wash vegetables with clean water before serving them.

Fruits and vegetables that are sweet, such as carrots, can be given in small amounts (1 to 2 tablespoons a day) as treats.

Pellets can also be offered in small amounts (25 g or 1 tablespoon per kg of body weight per day) optionally to adult rabbits, whereas they can be given freely to growing rabbits up to 6 months of age. Good quality pellets are rich in fiber (18% or more), low in protein (16% or less), low in fat (2.5% or less) and low in calcium (1% or less). However, the protein content should be higher (18%) when feeding growing rabbits.



Certain foods such as nuts, grains, corn, dried fruits, bread, pasta, chocolate and other confectioneries, should be avoided.

## Caecotrophs

Caecotrophs are fecal matter which are rich in nutrients and vitamins that the rabbit will ingest directly from his anus. These stools are softer and have a significant odor. This is an essential process to the rabbit's health. Certain rabbits suffering from obesity or a condition that causes a restriction in their mobility have difficulty ingesting their caecotrophs. Consequently, their rear area will become dirty and if the problem persists, they risk developing nutritional deficiencies.

## Water

Your rabbit should always have access to clean and fresh water. If he prefers drinking from the bottle, check it regularly to make sure it's working properly. If he prefers drinking from a bowl, make sure that it is heavy enough so that it doesn't tip over.



# RABBIT CARE

## The cage and the environment

Your rabbit's cage should be large enough to allow him to move freely without any restrictions and should include distinct areas for the litter, the food, and for resting.



It is important to provide him with one or more hiding places where he can seek shelter.

Because your rabbit does not have paw pads (contrary to cats and dogs), you should place a towel or blanket at the bottom of his cage to provide him with a soft surface to walk on. Doing so reduces the risk of irritation, wounds, and infection of the paws (pododermatitis).

Finally, because rabbits are sensitive to heat, their cage should be placed in a cool and well-ventilated space, and their water bowl should be refilled regularly, especially in the summer.

## Cleanliness

Rabbits are generally «clean», meaning that they usually defecate always in the same place. Once this spot has been determined, a litter box can be placed there. A cat litter box without a cover is ideal. A litter made of recycled paper is recommended because it is less dusty and is odorless. Wood shavings should be avoided because they are dusty and release strong odors when in contact with urine, which can be irritating to the rabbit's airways. Removal of feces and urine should be done daily and the litter box should be thoroughly cleaned once a week.

Your rabbit should do physical activity every day. He should be allowed time to walk outside of his cage for at least an hour each day. You can allow him to walk around the house under supervision or in a pen to fulfill this need. **Be careful! Rabbits like to nibble and gnaw, so make sure that yours does not have access to any electrical wires.**

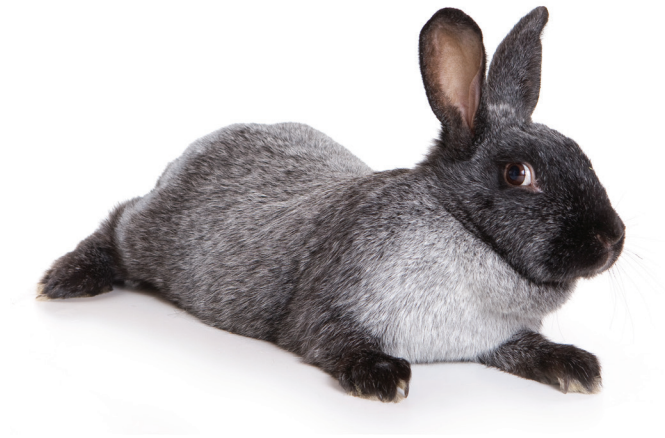


# RABBIT CARE

## Coat maintenance

Because your rabbit cannot vomit or expel hairballs, if he ingests too much hair it can accumulate in his digestive tract and cause an intestinal obstruction that can be dangerous to his health.

For that reason, it is important to brush him every day but for short periods at a time. As it may take a long time for him to get used to it, it is wise to offer him his favorite vegetables as a treat to make the procedure more pleasurable. Rabbits shed more hair when it's hot and when the seasons change so, during these periods, they can be brushed twice a day to avoid a rapid accumulation of hair in the stomach and intestines.



## The nails

It is important to cut your rabbit's nails regularly, at least once a month. You should get him used to having his paws and nails handled at a young age by offering him his favorite fruits or vegetables as a reward. This will make cutting the nails easier for you and more enjoyable for your pet.

## PARTICULAR FEATURES AND FREQUENT HEALTH PROBLEMS IN RABBITS

Being a herbivore, it is important that your rabbit not only eat fiber, but that he eats it often. Allowing him to nibble all day ensures a continuous digestive transit. As previously stated, rabbits are incapable of vomiting and cannot belch, so if the digestive transit stops (stasis), a significant amount of gas can accumulate in their stomach and put their life in danger.

Many factors can contribute to a digestive stasis: stress, obesity, lack of exercise, inadequate diet, dental problems, excessive ingestion of hair, ingestion of non-digestible objects or materials, pain, or other diseases.

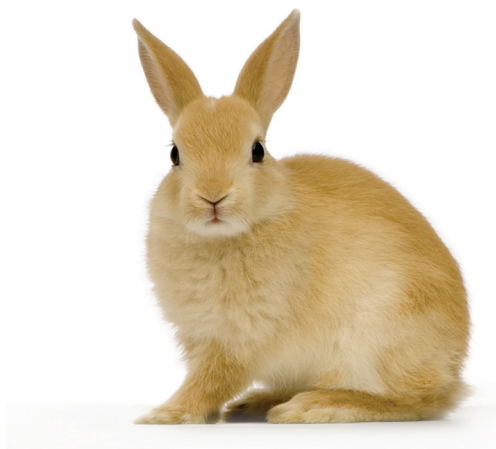
A light body frame combined with strong muscles make rabbits quick and agile creatures. However, because their bones are so thin, they are susceptible to fractures. Knowing this, it is important that you carefully handle your rabbit in order to avoid falls and accidents. When you pick him up, make sure you firmly hold his rear-end and properly support his back. Hiding his eyes can help to reassure him and keep him calm while being handled. In order to gain his confidence, reward him with his favorite vegetables when handling him. Eventually, he will let himself be handled more easily.



Thus, it is imperative that you consult your veterinarian immediately if, for any reason whatsoever, your rabbit stops eating even for just a few hours!

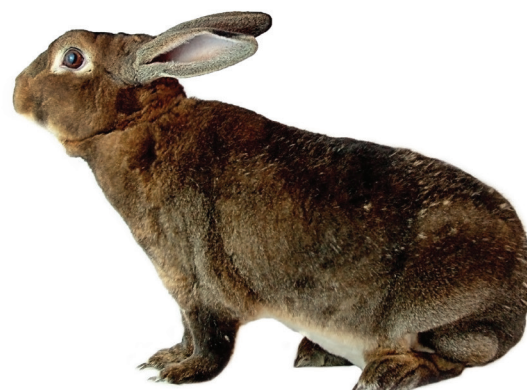
Rabbits' teeth grow continually. Because of this, they need a diet rich in fiber to ensure proper wear of their teeth. Rabbits' dentition is less adapted to chewing pellets because the chewing movement is done vertically and uses only a part of their teeth. This can cause excessive growth of certain teeth which can then deviate or form edges that can wound the cheeks and the tongue. Hay is the best choice for dental health because it promotes a circular motion of the jaw and an equal wear of the teeth.

## PARTICULAR FEATURES AND FREQUENT HEALTH PROBLEMS IN RABBITS



Are you wondering if the thick and whitish urine of your rabbit is normal? Absolutely! Rabbits expel calcium through their urine, making it more opaque. The urine can also take on a yellow to red-orange coloration. This is because of the presence of pigments called porphyrins that are also expelled in the urine.

Because rabbits are prey animals, they are naturally more nervous and are easily stressed. Patience and kindness are of great value when taming your new companion. It is also a good idea to supervise interactions between your rabbit and his feline or canine housemates. Rest assured though, many rabbits will develop a friendly relationship with fellow cats and dogs. However, contact with ferrets should be avoided, as rabbits are easy prey for these carnivores.



### When should you consult your veterinarian?

An annual exam is recommended in order to ensure that your rabbit is in good health.



If any problem develops, do not wait and consult your veterinarian **quickly!!**

The following behaviors can be signs of pain or sickness needing **urgent** medical attention:

- Diminished appetite, refusal to eat ;
- Absence of stool and/or urine production ;
- The animal stays hidden or still for several hours ;
- He has difficulty moving, seems paralyzed or seems to have a deformed limb;
- Constantly stretches his neck to breathe.





## HEALTH RECORD

### STERILIZATION

DATE (MM-DD-YYYY)

### SURGICAL INTERVENTION



CASTRATION  
(NEUTERING)



OVARIOHYSTERECTOMY  
(SPAYING)

### MEDICAL HISTORY

DATE (MM-DD-YYYY)	DIAGNOSTIC

### DEWORMING

DATE (MM-DD-YYYY)	FECAL ANALYSIS	TREATMENT

## HEALTH RECORD



### TESTS/RESULTS

DATE (MM-DD-YYYY)	TESTS	RESULTS

### WEIGHT CHART

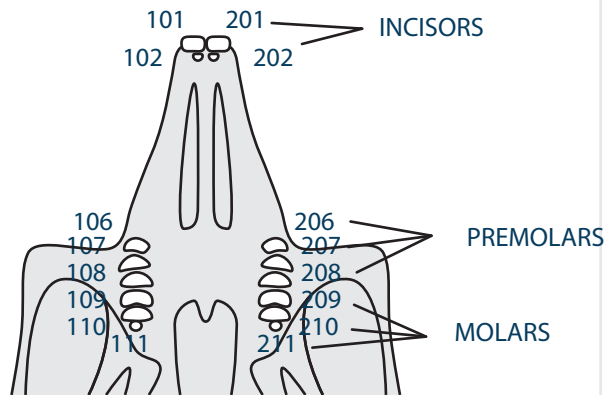
DATE (MM-DD-YYYY)	WEIGHT	FOOD	QUANTITY/DAY	COMMENTS
		HAY:		
		VEGETABLES:		
		FRUITS:		
		PELLETS:		
		OTHER:		



## HEALTH RECORD

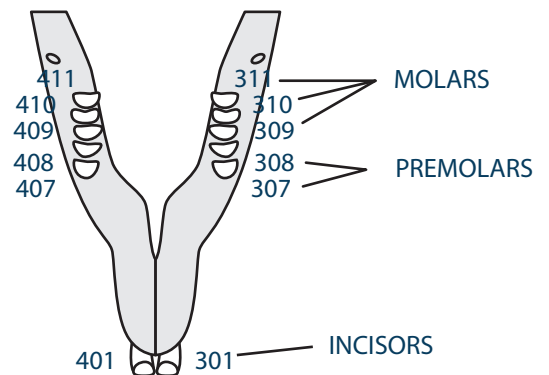
### DENTAL CHART

**RIGHT**



**MAXILLARY  
(upper jaw)**

**LEFT**



**MANDIBULAR  
(lower jaw)**

DATE OF TEETH TRIMMING (MM-DD-YYYY)	IMAGING: RADIOGRAPHY OR CT-SCAN (YES/NO)	TRIMMED TEETH	COMMENTS

# MONVET

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