



## FEEDING YOUR PET RABBIT

### ***What do rabbits eat?***

High quality rabbit chows, pellets, and good quality hay (such as alfalfa, grass, or clover) make up the rabbits diet. For rabbits less than 1 year old, pellets and hay should be available free choice, which means the rabbit is free to eat as much of each as it wishes. For animals over 1 year of age, hay, which provides fiber, should be available free choice and make up most of the diet. Pellets or chows can be offered at approximately 1/4 cup per 5 pounds of bodyweight. **Over-feeding pellets to adult rabbits is a common cause of disease.** While rabbits can eat any type of hay, alfalfa hay is too rich to be the only source of hay; other grass hays are preferred.

### ***How often should I feed my rabbit?***

Rabbits should be fed daily; hay should be available at all times.

### ***Do I need to give my rabbit vitamins?***

No, rabbits do not require extra vitamins. To help control hairballs, your veterinarian may prescribe a cat laxative, which can be given daily or every few days.

### ***Can I offer my rabbit treats?***

Yes, but be sure to check with your veterinarian first about what treats he or she might recommend. While obesity is not a common problem with rabbits, they certainly can become overweight if fed an abundance of high calorie treats. Items such as fruits and vegetables can be offered daily as well. With fruits and vegetables, they should be thought of as a supplement (think of fruits as a treat) and not as the sole diet. Therefore, limit their amount to no more than 20% of the diet, with vegetables making up most of this 20%. Fresh produce is best; make sure it's thoroughly washed prior to feeding. As with many pets, variety is the key, so offer small amounts of several items (avoid just lettuce, apples, and carrots). Avoid lettuce and celery as they are of little nutritional value. Anything green and leafy is loaded with vitamins and is a good supplement.

### ***What about water?***

Fresh water is offered 24 hours a day. If you offer your rabbit water in a bowl, make sure the rabbit does not spill it in its cage.

***Anything else?***

Chew toys should be available; anything suited for dogs, such as Nyla-bones or well-boiled meat bones are fine. Many owners offer their rabbits wood sticks to chew, which helps control overgrown incisors.