



# BUNNY 101

Bunnies make incredibly rewarding companions. They're smart, affectionate, entertaining, and undeniably cute. Unfortunately, they're also among the most misunderstood pets, often surrendered, sold, or abandoned simply because their owners don't fully understand them. At Bunny Huggers South Africa, we aim to raise the standards of bunny care, one bunny at a time, by educating those who love and care for them.

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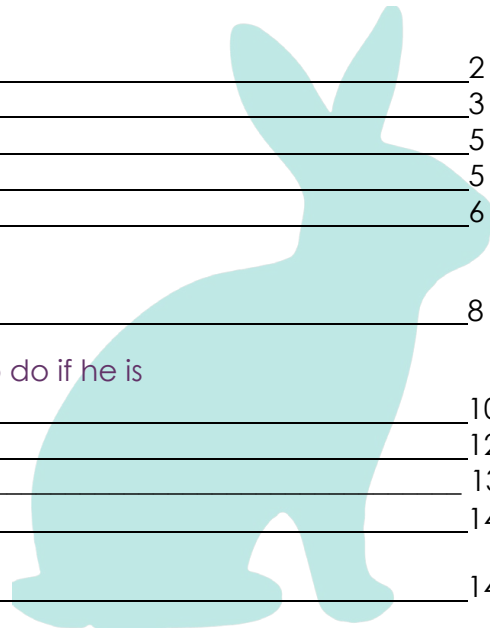
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- ♥ [Free Bunny Medical Tracker and Emergency Guide](#)
- ♥ [All our Brands \(Linktree\)](#)
- ♥ [BHSA Facebook Community](#)
- ♥ [BHSA Facebook Rehome Page](#)



Disclaimer: Bunny Huggers South Africa provides educational content based on our experience with bunnies to help raise the standard of bunny care in South Africa and globally. This document is not intended to replace professional veterinary advice. If your bunny is ill, contact a qualified veterinarian. This information is offered as support only, and we do not accept liability for any outcomes.

## 28 LIFESAVING BUNNY FACTS

What you need to know before getting a bunny

♥ **There are bunnies out there that need you more than you need them.** They live in rescues and in open fields, rather than in pet shops or on Gumtree. Bunnies breed quickly and easily. Pet shops and intentional bunny breeders love this fact because it means they can make 'easy' money. But population is a huge problem for bun-kind. This is because there are more bunnies out there than people willing to give them good, loving homes. Bunny rescuers take bunnies from bad people and bad situations and rehome them to homes where they will live their best lives. Rather adopt a bunny from a Rescue than buy one from a shop or off the internet. This way you do some good by NOT encouraging people to keep breeding bunnies.

♥ **Bunnies do not make ideal pets for kids, unless always supervised by an educated adult.**

Bunnies have very fragile backs and when picking them up, you need to support their back as well as their hind legs - one big kick, while dangling in the air could leave your bunny paralysed for life. Children's hands are too tiny to hold a bunny properly, and it is advised to always let kids sit on the floor to interact with them. Bunnies also don't always come when they are called and this could provoke the wrong type of behaviour - a child trying to hold a bunny down - or cause a child to lose interest in their pet, leaving it lonely, and stuck in a cage for the rest of its life. Bunnies have very sharp nails and teeth and will bite and scratch if they feel they should. Even people who are experienced with bunnies will tell you that they have probably been scratched on the chest more than once, by a bunny that did not feel like being held at the time. Please only adopt a bunny for a small child if you are going to be the main caregiver, will ensure the proper diet is followed and can ensure that your children only interact with the bunny under supervision. Bunnies have amazing personalities but will only reward you with affection on their terms (much like a cat). What we can confirm though, is that it's totally worth the patience and effort.

♥ **Bunnies can live inside as part of the family by becoming litterbox trained** (more perfectly so when they are sterilized). To start with litterbox training, place the litterbox in the corner that your bunny has chosen to do his business. Bunnies are creatures of habit and will most likely wee and poop in the same corner. We suggest using eco scentless wood pellets with a layer of hay on top. You can add a piece of toilet paper to the litterbox that has been used to wipe your bun's urine - this will show him that you want him to go there. Be persistent about throwing all droppings in the litterbox. If you are struggling, it is best to start small (in a cage or playpen) and then let your bunny "earn" more space as his manners improve. Once they've learned the habit, they will hardly ever urinate outside the litter box. Just remember that unsterilized bunnies will probably mark territory, leaving droppings and spraying urine all over the place - best to get them sterilized, it helps with manners.

♥ **Bunnies are not low maintenance pets, and they live up to 10 years.** Many people think that bunnies make great starting pets - this is not true. When you adopt a bunny, you need to be in it for the long run. Bunnies need a responsible caretaker who can ensure that: they follow the correct diet, they always have fresh water and hay available, they get enough run time, they are handled carefully, they aren't hiding illness or pain, their litterboxes are clean, they are sterilized to prevent aggressive/ hormonal behaviour, they are entertained and interacted with so that they do not go into depression. You also need to bunny-proof your home (or supervise out-time) as they have an instinct to chew and dig.

♥ **They are not cheap pets.** In contradiction to what most people think, there are a lot of costs associated with owning a bunny. Many bunnies have been rehomed due to people realizing that they cannot afford their pets.

Costs to consider (Prices: South African Rand in 2024)

- Oat Hay +R100 if bought in bulk
  - Greens/Veg R600 p/m (if R20 per day)
  - Quality Pellets R300+
  - Large enough cage / playpen / run R1500+
  - Toys / blankets / litterboxes / treats / bowls
  - Emergency kit / Vet bills
- Chances are that you will visit the vet at least once a year, whether it is or teeth/ear/eye/general check -up, digestive illness or sterilization. Surgery under sedation: R3000+ (Incl. Sterilization)

♥ **Domesticated bunnies cannot survive in the wild.** While many people feel that they are doing their pets a favour by “setting them free”. Stats show that a domesticated bunny (not born wild) will only survive an average of about 3 - 4 days in the wild. These domesticated pets mostly end up killed by vehicles or caught by predators. No animal deserves to be left in a box in the wild. If you can no longer take care of your pet, please rehome him responsibly, ensuring he goes to a good and knowledgeable home where he is part of the family

<https://www.facebook.com/bunnyhuggersrehomepage/>

## Food

♥ **Hay! Hay! Hay! - Bunnies should not go without fresh hay for even one day.** All bunnies should have access to unlimited fresh grass-based hay: Oat hay (most common), teff aka eragrostis, mountain hay, meadow hay, orchard grass & timothy hay (hard to find in SA). Lucerne aka alfalfa is not a grass hay but rather a legume and should only be fed as a treat due to high calcium content. Eating enough hay will ensure a healthy digestive system (prevents intestinal issues and blockage). Bunnies that fill up on pellets, do not eat enough hay – check that your bunny is consuming at least its body size in hay per day before introducing pellets. Sometimes it is necessary to take pellets away completely to encourage hay eating – your bunnies WILL beg for it, don't give in! They will learn to love their hay and will be happier & healthier for it. Do not mistake straw for hay (hay is not just golden in colour but also has green and brown bits, as well as seeds). Although bunnies may eat straw, it has no nutritional value.

### BUNNY DIET SUMMARY



Unlimited grass hay and fresh grass  
1-2 cups safe herbs / greens  
2 tbsp. /1 egg cup quality, high fibre, non-muesli pellets  
1 tsp. occasional fruit / treats

♥ **Bunnies must never stop eating.** A bunny's gut needs to constantly move or else he could get Gastrointestinal (GI) stasis where the digestive system completely shuts down. Bunnies are not like other animals that you only feed once or twice a day, they need to eat constantly. GI stasis is very serious and can be fatal. This is one of the reasons why hay should always be available.

♥ **Do not feed your bunny ICEBERG LETTUCE.** This is one of the most common mistakes that new bunny owners make. Iceberg lettuce has very little nutritional value and it can cause diarrhoea. There are varieties of better (more nutritious) alternatives.

♥ **Pellets: Feed LESS, but HIGH QUALITY and do not feed muesli mixes.** Bunnies cannot properly digest corn, pea and seed mixes. Feeding these foods (even if the label says it's for bunnies) will jeopardize their digestive and dental health and shorten their life span. Muesli mixes also encourage selective feeding (picking out the good bits), which can lead to nutrient deficiency. Although cheap plain brown pellets from the supermarket is still better than muesli mixes, they still have loads of unnecessary filler-ingredients. We encourage you to go choose as high-quality as possible for health and longevity– rather feed LESS, but HIGHER QUALITY when it comes to pellets. Providing a quality diet is the most effective way to avoid costly vet visits, since digestive issues and dental issues are amongst the most common bunny-illnesses.

Link to Article: The problem with muesli mixes

<https://www.harcourt-brown.co.uk/articles/free-food-for-rabbits/the-problem-with-muesli-mixes-1>

A pellet-free diet is also possible - especially if your bunny is overweight, or too obsessed with pellets that they don't eat their hay. Do some research on this before you make the move and figure out how to substitute the lost nutrients (a good variety of safe greens / botanicals). Watch closely to ensure your bunny is not striking by not-eating at all.

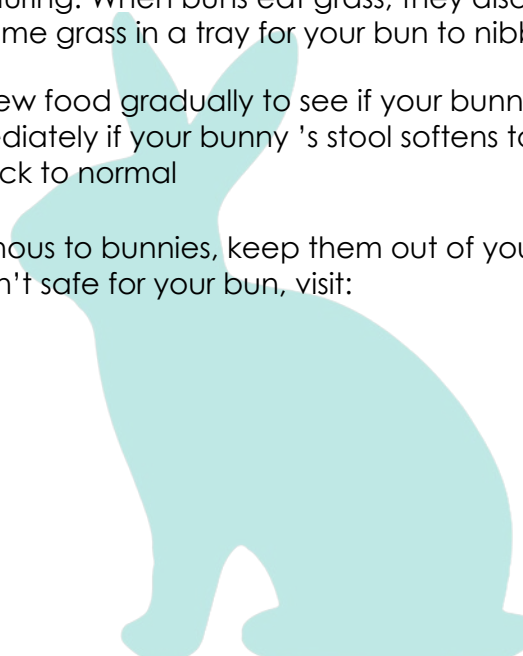
**Grazing on fresh grass is essential for dental health - something overlooked by many bunny owners.**

Bunnies' teeth are constantly growing and need to be worn down by their diet. Most people are under the impression that chewing on wood or mineral blocks wear the teeth down, but in fact letting your bunny graze on fresh grass is the most effective way to ensure dental health. Grass (and fresh veg) contains silica which wears the teeth down during. When buns eat grass, they also grind opposed to chew. If you don't have a garden, plant some grass in a tray for your bunny to nibble on.

**Introduce new foods one at a time.** Always introduce new food gradually to see if your bunny's system tolerates it. Stop feeding the specific food immediately if your bunny's stool softens too much (diarrhoea). Only try something new once it is back to normal

**Keep house plants away.** Many house plants are poisonous to bunnies, keep them out of your bunny's reach. Better safe than sorry. For a list of plants that aren't safe for your bunny, visit:

<http://www.alllearssac.org/badplants.html>



## Time for the V-E-T

♥ **Know your bunny's poop!** Yes! Nothing gets a bun- mom as excited as her bun's first poop after illness or surgery. Your bun's poop is the best way to monitor his health. Bunnies have 2 types of stools – the normal round ones that they drop any - and everywhere, and caecotrophes (grapelike, squishy poo that they eat from their bum). Both are normal and it is important to know what they should look like. Caecotrophes are rarely seen (because your bun eats them), but when they are left behind, they are often mistaken for diarrhea. Real diarrhea is very rare in bunnies but can be fatal. Healthy normal droppings should be not too hard, not too soft, not too dark (darkness indicates lack of fibre/hay), not too small, also not strung together with hair. Poops that are strung together with hair indicate that you need to groom your bunny more to prevent excess hair from being digested. If your buns is frequently leaving caecotrophes behind, he could be overweight – not able to reach them.

🐰 **If your bunny stops eating and/or pooping it is an emergency!** Bunnies are prey animals, and it is natural for them to hide any illness or pain. The most common symptom of illness would be if your bunny seems lethargic (out -of-it), not himself and/or when a bunny stops eating/pooping or refusing treats. At this point it normally means the issue has already progressed and it is time to see a vet immediately - DO NOT WASTE TIME. Bunnies commonly suffer from tummy gas/bloat/gastrointestinal (GI) stasis, which can be fatal if not treated. GI stasis can also be a secondary symptom of a more serious underlying cause, like infection. Always keep an emergency kit at home and know who your closest bunny savvy vet is (as well as after hours). Bunnies tend to get sick on weekends or late evenings when all the vets are closed.



♥ **Use a bun-savvy vet.** Bunnies are exotic animals (with digestive systems more like a horse than any other creature) and not all vets have the experience or knowledge to treat them. In the worst cases, inexperienced vets can worsen the condition of your bunny rather than making him better. Refer to our list of bun-savvy vets or chat ask members for advice on the Facebook group.

♥ **Sterilizing your bunny is HIGHLY recommended.** Not only does it help prevent unwanted litters, but it also reduces chances of cancer (which is very common in older females) and reduces aggressive and or territorial behaviour such as spraying and bad litter box manners.

♥ **NEVER starve your bunny (even before an operation).** Bunnies cannot vomit and therefore do not need to be starved before an operation. Also, increasing the time your bunny goes without food can cause GI Stasis, so let your bunny eat right up until he is sedated and encourage him to eat as soon as possible after he awakes. If a vet tells you to starve your bunny - run for the hills, because then he isn't bun -savvy.

## Neat and tidy

♥ **White vinegar magic.** Clean litterboxes and urine stains on plastic with white vinegar. Not only does it work like a charm, but it also dries odourless and is completely bunny safe. Directions: Spray area with vinegar, let it soak for a while, scrub with a little water and dish washing liquid and rinse.



♥ **Angora (long haired) bunnies need daily grooming.** If you have an Angora, please groom daily to avoid matts. When you don't groom enough, uncomfortable matts form that pull on their skin and restrict movement. They can sometimes be very difficult to remove without injuring (in severe cases you might need to take your bunny for a shave under sedation at a vet). Angoras also need to be shaved in the summer to avoid heat exhaustion (not under sedation, but at a bunny -savvy parlour). You can also learn to groom your bunny yourself.

♥ **Short haired bunnies also need grooming during moulting season.** All bunnies will shed hair during the change of seasons. Bunnies digest a lot of this hair when grooming themselves, which causes blockages in the digestive system (bunnies cannot vomit hairballs like cats do). Wet your hands - shake off most of the water and then run your fingers through your bunny 's fur, gently pulling out all excess hair. Do this a few times every day while your bunny is moulting. You can use a pet brush too, but be careful, their skin is delicate, so avoid brushing too much (you don't want to brush out all your bunny's hair!)

♥ **Trim nails regularly, but don't cut the nerve!** A bunny's nails need to be trimmed regularly, or else they could get hooked and rip out - this is a very painful and bloody experience. Learn to do this correctly by looking at a few YouTube videos. You must know how to look for the nerve/ "quick" before trimming them with a dog nail cutter or take your bun to a professional.

♥ **NEVER bath or submerge a bunny in water.** Bunnies self-groom like cats and should never be bathed. Its unnatural and stressful - they can go into shock or die from a heart attack. Even if you do find a bunny that tolerates bathing, it's still stressful and not necessary. If your bunny does get wet for any reason, be sure to dry him properly. Their fur is thick and doesn't dry well – this can cause skin conditions. If very dirty, use a damp cloth, or do a bunny butt wash (google). Stay away from chemicals like commercial bunny shampoo. If your bun is heavily soiled with poop that has already dried around the genital area, you might need to have him shaved by a vet under sedation.

## Living bun's best life

♥ **Bunnies are social animals and need company.** Bunnies are much happier in bonded groups or pairs. Sterilized male/female pairs, female/female pairs or groups with 1 male and numerous females are normally the easiest match. Always remember that unbonded bunnies will fight viciously (till death), so read up on the introduction process before attempting a bonding session. <http://bunny-huggers.co.za/how-to-bond-your-buns/> discusses bonding in detail (neutral territory is key). Hormones also play a massive role in aggressive/territorial behaviour which means sterilizing your bun is highly recommended before adopting a mate (also to prevent unwanted litters). It is also highly recommended to take your bunny on numerous dates and let him choose his own friend this way you will have the best chance at a successful bond.

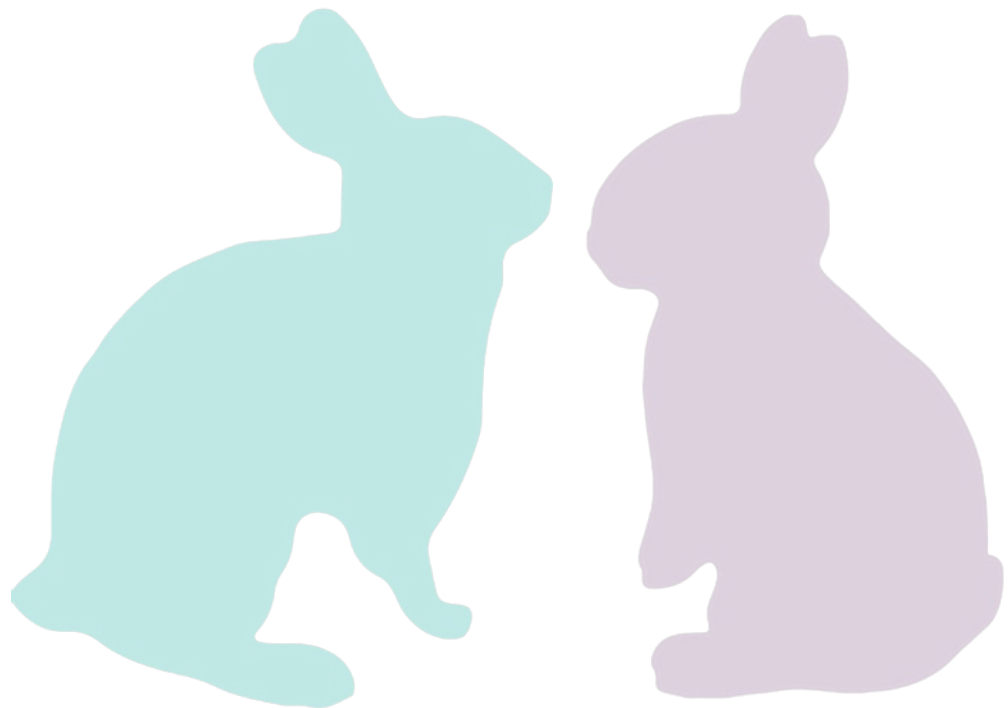
♥ **Do not house bunnies with guinea pigs.** Even though they seem to tolerate each other, they cannot communicate. A bunny can easily injure or kill a piggy if a fight occurred. They also have different dietary needs and can pass diseases onto each other.

♥ **Bored bunnies get naughty.** Keep your bunny entertained with toys (the wooden parrot kind is normally fine as they are coloured with food colouring). Only use plastic toys made of hard plastic. Spice up the mix with different colours and textures. Use old rugs for your bunnies to dig on.

Bunnies also love tunnels, places to jump on and holes to hide in (cardboard boxes work well if your bunny doesn't chew and swallow the cardboard like mine do). Toilet rolls or paper towel rolls work very well, especially when stuffed with hay. Keeping your bunny entertained is the best way to keep him from chewing your electrical cords.

♥ **Bunnies need run space – a hutch is not enough!** Bunnies need at least a few hours of run time daily. They are not cage animals. Permanently living in a cage could cause depression and aggressive behaviour. Bunnies, like most animals, need exercise, so ensure that your bunny has access to a space large enough for them to reach full speed running and with enough room to do a couple of binkies. Think playpens or enclosed runs, or bunny proof an area of your house.

♥ **Bunnies do not handle heat well and do better in colder temperatures.** You need to keep your bunny cool and hydrated in summer as they can die from heat exhaustion - anything from 26 Celsius and higher is a danger zone. There are many ways to keep your bunny cool, from ice bottles, to fans, cool tiles, etc. Ask members for tips if you haven't done this before. If you have a long-haired bunny (like an Angora or Jersey Wooley) - have him/her shaved for the summer at a bunny-savvy parlour.



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# THE DIET GUIDE

What to feed your bunny - probably the most important thing to know about bunnies

## Let's recap; The diet of an average bunny older than 6 months



Unlimited fresh grass and grass-hay  
1-2 cups safe herbs / greens  
2 tbsp. / 1 egg cup quality, high fibre, non-muesli pellets  
1 tsp. occasional fruit / treats

### Fresh Grass

Letting your bunny graze on fresh grass is key to their dental health. Because their teeth are always growing, they need a diet that naturally helps wear them down. While many people think chewing on wood or mineral blocks helps, the best way to keep their teeth healthy is by allowing them to munch on fresh grass. Grass (and some veggies) contains silica, which helps grind their teeth down. When bunnies eat grass, they grind it, rather than chew, which is more effective for tooth wear. If you don't have access to a garden, you can grow some grass in a tray for your bunny to enjoy indoors!

### Grass Hay Types

Staples (your bunny should eat at least their body size in hay every day)

- Timothy hay - Imported and often expensive in South Africa.
- Oat hay - Has a wide, flat surface. It's green when fresh but can become quite dry toward the end of the season.

Additional Options (Great for variety):

- Teff (also known as Eragrostis) - Thin and fine, with less dust than oat hay.
- Other imported hays - Mountain hay, meadow hay, orchard grass.

**Blog Post: Why is Machine Dry Hay Better?** <https://pethabitat.co.za/BlogDetail/328>

### Why is Straw & Lucern different?

Do not confuse straw with hay. Straw is dry, yellow, and has no nutritional value-it's much cheaper, but not suitable for feeding. Lucerne (alfalfa) isn't a grass hay; it's a legume. It should only be offered occasionally due to its high calcium content (except for bunnies under 6 months old, as it helps with bone development).

### Safe Herbs & Greens

Your bunny can enjoy a variety of herbs and greens, including carrot tops, soup celery, regular celery (chopped into small wheels to prevent choking on strings), kale, basil, mint, coriander, rosemary, fennel, oregano, sage, lavender, dandelion leaves and flowers, roses/hibiscus flowers (ensure they're free of pesticides), and mixed lettuce (opt for dark green or red leaf varieties, and avoid iceberg lettuce). There are many food guides available online, but they can sometimes vary. When in doubt, it's best to avoid a particular food. Always choose options that are consistently marked as safe across multiple reliable sources.



## Treats

Apple, Pineapple, Strawberry, Banana, Raisins, Carrot, Grapes, Papaya, Watermelon, Mango  
(Remove all seeds, except strawberries)

**Choose quality, high fibre, non-muesli, pellets.** Bunnies cannot properly digest corn, pea, and seed mixes. Feeding these foods (even if the label says it's for bunnies) can harm their digestion, damage their dental health, and ultimately shorten their lifespan. Muesli mixes also lead to selective feeding, where your bunny picks out the tastier bits, which can result in nutrient deficiencies. While cheap, plain brown pellets from the supermarket are a better option than muesli mixes, they still contain a lot of unnecessary fillers. It's best to choose the highest quality pellets possible for your bunny's health and longevity. It's better to feed *less* but *better-quality* pellets. A proper diet is the most effective way to avoid costly vet visits, as digestive and dental problems are among the most common health issues in bunnies.

### Blog Post: What is the Best Rabbit Pellets available in South Africa?

<https://pethabitat.co.za/BlogDetail/327>

Our Recommendation:

### Bunny Nature Rabbit Dream



Super premium, Clean Food: No preservatives, binders, flavour enhancers & colourants. Truly the next generation of bunny-food in South Africa. We've waited long for this upgrade – please support the folks that made this possible in South Africa :

Imported to SA by Pet Habitat (Online shop + supplies a selection of vets/vet shops and stores)  
1kg @ +-R450 in Sept 2024 / South African Rand)

<https://pethabitat.co.za/ProductList/Page0/Size10/createddate/Desc/Category47/Event0/BestSeller0/Bargains0>

YouTube Product Video

<https://youtu.be/2P-jdoKJAKk?si=MQWNGiByM1tdbR7->

### Burgess Excel

<https://www.burgesspetcare.com/brands/excel/>

1.5kg @+-R300 in 2024 / South African Rand

### Science Selective

<https://supremepetfoods.com/products/small-pet-products/science-selective/>

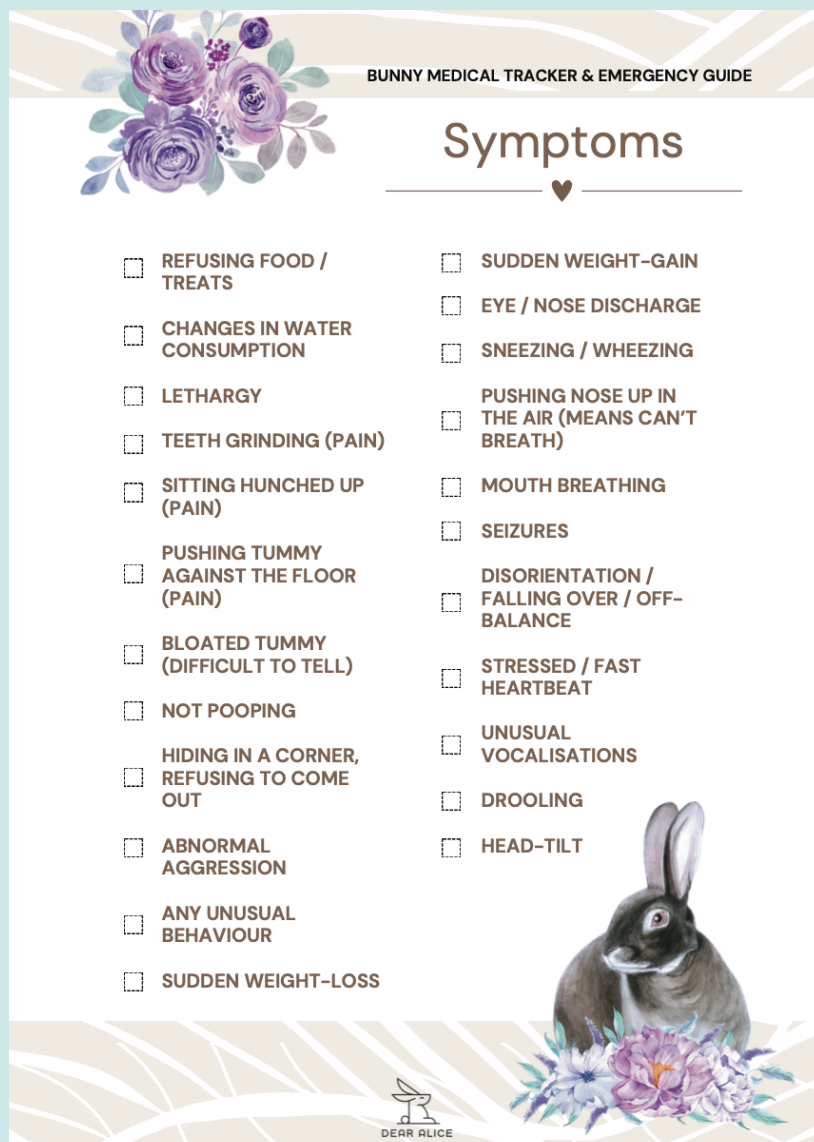
1.5kg @+- R500 in 2024 / South African Rand)

**Bunnies under 6 months.** Young bunnies (under 6 months) are still developing and need a different diet. They should have unlimited access to alfalfa (also known as lucerne) to support bone development, along with an increased pellet allowance. If weight gain is needed, you can also add rolled oats to their diet. For baby bunnies that were separated from their mother too early (between 4-7 weeks), it's important to supplement their diet with Royal Canin kitten milk and Protexin probiotic powder (both are available at most vets and veterinary shops).

## HOW TO KNOW IF YOUR BUNNY IS SICK

Knowing the signs of illness

Most bunnies are skilled at hiding their symptoms, so by the time you notice something is wrong, it might be too late. Do not wait—take immediate action!



**BUNNY MEDICAL TRACKER & EMERGENCY GUIDE**

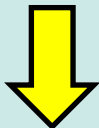
### Symptoms

- REFUSING FOOD / TREATS
- CHANGES IN WATER CONSUMPTION
- LETHARGY
- TEETH GRINDING (PAIN)
- SITTING HUNCHED UP (PAIN)
- PUSHING TUMMY AGAINST THE FLOOR (PAIN)
- BLOATED TUMMY (DIFFICULT TO TELL)
- NOT POOPING
- HIDING IN A CORNER, REFUSING TO COME OUT
- ABNORMAL AGGRESSION
- ANY UNUSUAL BEHAVIOUR
- SUDDEN WEIGHT-LOSS
- SUDDEN WEIGHT-GAIN
- EYE / NOSE DISCHARGE
- SNEEZING / WHEEZING
- PUSHING NOSE UP IN THE AIR (MEANS CAN'T BREATHE)
- MOUTH BREATHING
- SEIZURES
- DISORIENTATION / FALLING OVER / OFF-BALANCE
- STRESSED / FAST HEARTBEAT
- UNUSUAL VOCALISATIONS
- DROOLING
- HEAD-TILT

DEAR ALICE

Our sister brand, **Dear Alice**, offers a beautifully designed, free PDF that helps you capture your bunny's personal and medical details to assist you with tracking symptoms, medication, procedures and your bunny's medical history.

To receive the full tracker pdf, simply sign up here:



<https://subscribepage.io/DearAliceBunny>

## ♥ NO POOP = VET EMERGENCY!

Your bunny's poop is one of the best indicators of their health. Bunnies produce two types of stools: the round, dry pellets that they drop around, and caecotrophes, which are soft, grape-like droppings. Both are normal. It's important to monitor your bunny's droppings regularly to catch any changes early.



## ♥ CAECOTROPHES (first 2 images above) – THESE ARE NORMAL AND HEALTHY

Caecotrophes are a normal part of your bunny's digestive process. They need to consume these droppings to absorb essential nutrients. Typically, bunnies eat caecotrophes directly from their bum and they are rarely seen. However, if left behind, they might be mistaken for diarrhoea. While true diarrhoea is rare in bunnies, it can be serious and potentially fatal.

If you do notice caecotrophes, don't panic. If your bunny is leaving them behind, it might indicate that their diet is too rich or that they are overweight and unable to reach their bum. This is usually not a major concern, but if it persists, it could lead to a loss of vital nutrients.

## ♥ FECAL PELLETS / DROPPINGS (third image above) – THESE ARE NORMAL AND HEALTHY

Your bunny's normal stools should be plentiful, large, and perfectly round balls (or slightly egg-shaped if particularly large). They should be soft enough to squash easily and consist mainly of damp or dry hay and grass particles. The stools should not contain a lot of fur.

## ♥ SMALL/ HARD/ STICKY POOP (first image below) – NOT SO HEALTHY

Dark, sticky poops often indicate a lack of fibre in your bunny's diet. To address this, increase their hay intake and reduce other types of food. Small, hard poops can be a sign that your bunny's digestion is not functioning properly, putting them at risk of gastrointestinal stasis (GI stasis). If you notice these symptoms, contact your vet and bring a poop sample with you.

## ♥ STRINGY POOP (second image below) – NOT SO HEALTHY

You need to help your bun digest less hair by grooming him more with a brush or dampen your hands and slide gently over your bun's body while collecting loose hair (rubber kitchen gloves work like a charm). Poops that look like this can send your bun into GI stasis if not attended to.



## Home Emergency Kit

Keep your bunny as comfortable and pain-free as possible until you can visit a bunny-savvy vet (ASAP).

### **Warm water bottles / blankets / electric pads:**

A sick bunny 's temperature drops quickly. Keep him warm but make sure that it's not hot enough to burn him.

**1ml/3ml Syringes** (without the needles). Have a look at YouTube videos on how to syringe feed –insert the syringe from the side of the mouth (behind the front teeth) to prevent accidentally squirting food/ liquid into your bunny's airway (choking hazard)!

**Rescue Remedy drops:** Keep your bunny calm by rubbing 3 drops on the inside of each ear. (Also works well for travelling, bonding and/or other stressful activities)

♥ **Critical Care/Dual Care:** High-fibre food made for sick/recovering small animals. It's easily mixed into a paste with water. You can syringe feed this to your bunny to keep the gut from shutting down. A less healthy alternative is apple/carrot/ banana Purity baby food.

### ♥ **Devil's claw / Analgesic Solution:**

Most prescription pain killers can only be given once a day. This herbal medication can be given much more frequently and will help the bun pull through until his next dose. Syringe feed 4 drops (0.1 ml) every hour for 3 hours, and then 3 hourly. Available at health shops and Dis-chem.

♥ **Chamomile tea/rooibos tea:** Keep your bunny hydrated when he is in pain. Chamomile manages pain (a little) and is calming, while rooibos promotes hydration.



Disclaimer: Bunny Huggers South Africa provides educational content based on our experience with bunnies to help raise the standard of bunny care in South Africa and globally. This document is not intended to replace professional veterinary advice. If your bunny is ill, contact a qualified veterinarian. This information is offered as support only, and we do not accept liability for any outcomes

## Bunny-Savvy Vet List

Bunnies are classed as exotic animals in veterinary terms, which means treating them requires specialized training. Veterinarians who have trained and worked only in South Africa are unlikely to have extensive experience in the treatment of bunnies. Our vet list is always a work in progress. While we do our best to recommend reputable bunny vets, we (admins) have not been able to personally visit each of these practices and rely on the recommendations and experiences of our members. Please note that in most cases, it is a specific vet within a practice who has a special interest in rabbits and not necessarily the entire practice.

Make sure you know who your closest bunny vet is and keep their contact number handy for emergencies. Record this information in your medical tracker (refer page 10).

List of Bunny Vets in South Africa: <http://bunny-huggers.co.za/rabbit-savvy-vet-list/>

### QUICK LOCAL REFERENCES, WESTERN CAPE, SOUTH AFRICA

#### Dr. Bernice van Huysteen

EXOTIC SURGICAL SERVICES (No Emergencies / Appointments only)

Previously called CEAH / Cape Exotic Animal Hospital

10 De Villiers Drive, Valmary Park, Durbanville

060 381 9766 Whatsapp / Call

[Visit Website](#)—

#### Dr. Coetzee de Beer

CARE (Centre for Avian, Reptiles & Exotics)

Pellmeadow Estate, Protea Road, Klapmuts

021 875 5063 / After-hours: 074 134 3271

[Visit Website](#)

#### Dr. Karli Du Preez

EXOTIC VET CENTURY CITY (Previously at CEAH)

Nordic Park Building, 1st Floor, Unit C, 15 Boundary Road, Century City

087 821 7323 Whatsapp or Call / 071 694 5902 Calls Only

[Visit Website](#)

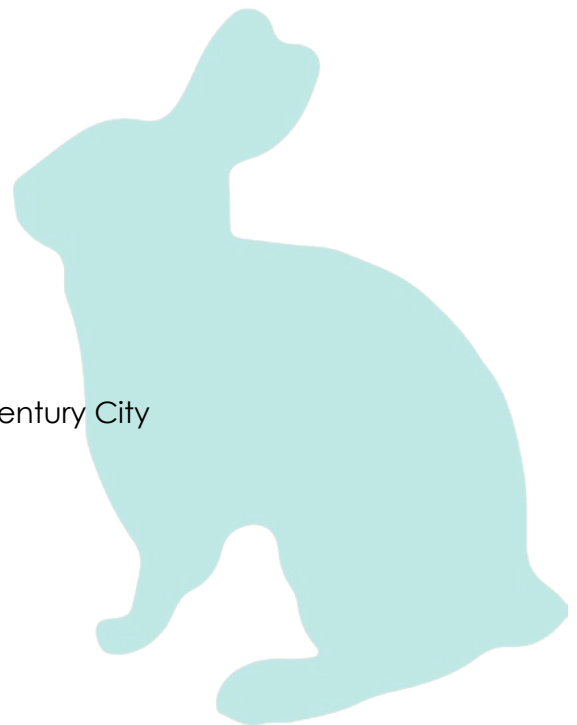
#### Dr. Esther Meusel

VILLAGE VET CLINIC (Previously at CEAH)

Cnr 251 Main Road & Fairways Avenue, Hermanus

064 875 9935

[Visit Website](#) [Online Shop](#)



## Prescription Drugs

Get these from your vet to keep at home in case of an emergency. Most dosages depend on your bunny's weight. Ask your vet to write down the dosage for each of your bunnies on the bottle. If you have the meds, but not the dosage and cannot contact your vet, at least contact one of our admins or knowledgeable members to assist, rather than guessing. Overdosing could be fatal.

Always remember to tell your vet which meds you have already given, in what quantities and when then they were last given.

**Clopomon/ Metoclopramide (gut motility drug)** keeps the gut working to prevent GI stasis but can be dangerous if given to a bunny with a blockage. Important for bunnies that have stopped eating/pooping. Dosage is normally repeated every 8 -12 hours.

**Baytril/ Enrovet (antibiotic)** fights infections. Some bunny owners give antibiotics straight away when they suspect their bunny is sick.

Do so with caution because this can lead to antibiotic resistance. The vet may prefer to prescribe a better antibiotic to suit the exact ailment and now your bunny must first finish the course of antibiotic he started with.

**Petcam/ Metacam/Meloxicam (painkiller/anti- inflammatory)** providing a bunny with pain relief, which is often the first step towards recovery. Make sure that you know how to read your bunny's body language – how to tell when your bunny is in pain because giving this unnecessarily or for prolonged periods will be bad for your bunny's kidneys. Dosage is normally repeated every 24 hours.

## ADOPT A BUNNY

Adopt, don't shop !

Unfortunately, bunnies are often seen as disposable pets, leading to neglect, abandonment, and irresponsible breeding. Many bunnies, including babies, are in desperate need of loving homes. Be part of the solution—**adopt, don't shop!** Our group strongly supports and encourages this initiative. Here is a list of organizations that always have bunnies in need of homes and/or fosters:

### ♥ THE BUNNY HUGGERS SOUTH AFRICA REHOME PAGE

We created the Bunny Huggers South Africa Rehome Page to help network bunnies in need of homes and/or lost and found bunnies across South Africa. Make a difference by adopting a bun in need of a loving home. <https://www.facebook.com/bunnyhuggersrehomepage/>

### WESTERN CAPE

Barefoot Rescue – Kirstenhof 082 780 3955 (Michelle)

<https://www.facebook.com/BarefootRescue>

Hop Haven – Paarl (Caitlin)

[hophavenbunnyrescue@gmail.com](mailto:hophavenbunnyrescue@gmail.com) | <https://www.facebook.com/HopHavenBunnyRescue>

Noordhoek Bunny Rescue – Noordhoek 062 124 5325 (Sian)

<https://www.facebook.com/noordhoekbunnyrescue/>



Southern Cape Bunny Haven – 060 466 2810 (Monique)

<https://www.facebook.com/SouthernCapeBunnies>  
[bunnyhaven.southern-cape.com](http://bunnyhaven.southern-cape.com)

Boggle & Brux – Southern Suburbs CT 064 533 6910 (Kerri & Lori)

[boggleandbruxct@gmail.com](mailto:boggleandbruxct@gmail.com) | <https://www.facebook.com/BoggleAndBruxCT/>

Pansy Rabbit Rescue – Cape Town

[pansyrabbit.rescue@aol.com](mailto:pansyrabbit.rescue@aol.com) | <https://www.facebook.com/pansyrabbits>

## **GAUTENG**

Bunny Tales Rescue – Fourways 081 040 0489 (Anabel)

[bunnytalesrescue@gmail.com](mailto:bunnytalesrescue@gmail.com) | <https://www.facebook.com/Bunnytalesrescue>

Berario Bunnies – Randburg 083 679 2243 (Meahni)

[berario.bunnies@gmail.com](mailto:berario.bunnies@gmail.com) | <https://www.facebook.com/BerarioBunnies>

Critter Rescue SA – Benoni 073 437 8918 (Karien)

[critterrescuesa@gmail.com](mailto:critterrescuesa@gmail.com) | <https://www.facebook.com/CritterRescueSA>

The Lonehill Bunnies – Lonehill 082 888 5895 (Cristina)

[lonehillbunnies@gmail.com](mailto:lonehillbunnies@gmail.com) | <https://www.facebook.com/lonehillbunnies>

## **KZN**

The 3 R's Rescue – Hibberdene 064 659 8505

<https://www.facebook.com/the3rsrescue/>

Pawsome Buns – Networking Bunnies needing homes in KZN

<https://www.facebook.com/pawsome.buns>

## **EASTERN CAPE**

REW Foundation – East London 082 704 8106 (Sonia)

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100025590472122>



## QUICK LINKS TO MORE BUNNY STUFF

### Our Neuter & Spay Guide

<http://bunny-huggers.co.za/rabbit-neuter-spay-guide/>



### Learn more on our website

<http://bunny-huggers.co.za/>



### Free Bunny Medical Tracker and Emergency Guide

<https://subscribepage.io/DearAliceBunny>



### All our Brands (Linktree)

<https://linktr.ee/dearalicebunny>



### Bunny Huggers SA – Our Facebook Community

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/BunnyHuggersSA/>



### Bunny Huggers SA Facebook Rehome Page

<https://www.facebook.com/bunnyhuggersrehomepage>



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