

Bunny Palooza

Let's Talk Pellets for Rabbits

Does My Pet Rabbit Need Pellets?

The short answer is **NO**.

This may come as a surprise to many rabbit owners, but pellets are not essential to include in your adult rabbit's diet. Hay, fresh greens and water fulfill a mature rabbit's main dietary requirements. Pellets can, however, be a way to ensure your rabbit receives some extra vitamins, and calories if required.

Pellets were originally manufactured as a convenience food to quickly fatten up livestock rabbits. If fed to your pet rabbit, pellets should only account for up to 5% of their diet. There are many different kinds of pelleted rabbit food, and it is important to ensure the brand you choose is made with only rabbit-safe ingredients and does not include too many "fillers"

Read your Labels!

It is very important to read the labels on any pelleted food you feed your rabbit. Your veterinarian is a good reference regarding which brands are best for your pet.

Many types of commercial rabbit pellets are a mix of various ingredients, some of which are unsafe for your rabbit to consume. Companies that manufacture pellets try to entice rabbit owners to buy their products, using phrases like "100% Complete and Balanced Formula", "Premium Nutrition Adult Rabbit Food", "Gourmet Variety Diet", and "Advanced Nutrition". Be cautious, as these brands often contain fillers that are not safe for your rabbit to eat.

Try to avoid the following ingredients when selecting a pelleted food for your rabbit: Seeds, corn, fruits, nuts, rice, and dried vegetables and peas. Also avoid non-vegan ingredients (e.g., pork, fish oil, all animal by-products, and dairy) as well as ingredients that are listed as "and/or" which means the manufacturer is not able to tell you whether it is an ingredient in the selected bag of pellets.

Nursing and Young Rabbits

Nursing and young rabbits up to 6 months of age should have pellets in their diet. Note that pellets geared for rabbits aged 6 months and under have different ingredients than pellets formulated for adult rabbits. Typically, nursing and growing rabbits are given unlimited pellets, ideally alfalfa based which contain extra nutrients. They are then gradually restricted to a limited diet of pellets by 6 months of age, per the recommended feeding quantity indicated on the bag or as advised by a veterinarian.

Adult Rabbits

Once weaning off of the young rabbit pellet diet is almost complete, your rabbit should be gradually introduced to adult rabbit pellets that are primarily composed of timothy hay and that ideally contain: 18% or higher fibre content, 12-14% protein, and no more than 3% fat content. The amount of pellets an adult rabbit should consume in a day is normally based on their weight, unless a veterinarian recommends otherwise for your rabbit. For example:

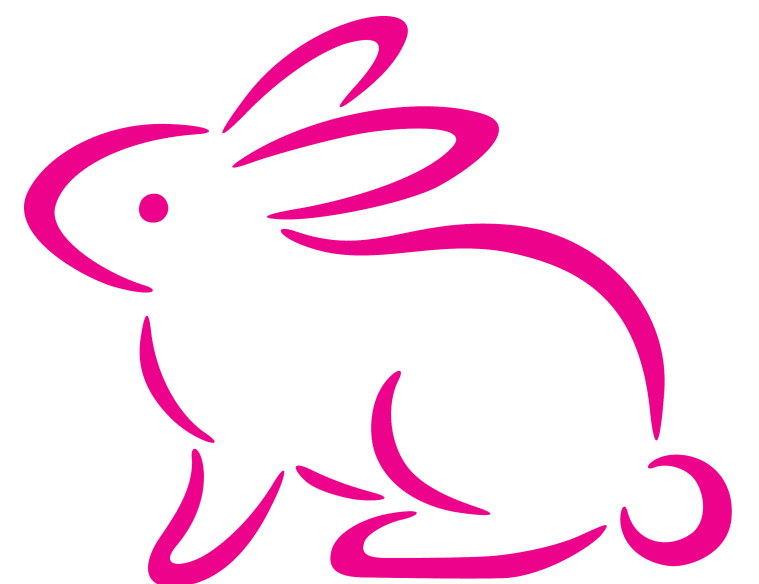
Rabbit's weight - Recommended daily amount of pellets:

2 lbs - 2 Tbsp	7 lbs - 3 Tbsp + 1/4 cup
3 lbs - 3 Tbsp	8 lbs - 1/2 cup
4 lbs - 1/4 cup	9 lbs - 1 Tbsp + 1/2 cup
5 lbs - 1 Tbsp + 1/4 cup	10 lbs - 2 Tbsp + 1/2 cup
6 lbs - 2 Tbsp + 1/4 cup	

How to Feed Pellets

Many owners feed pellets in a bowl, however rabbits tend to gobble them up quickly. A good trick is to spread their daily pellet ration out on the floor or sprinkle them in their hay to encourage their natural foraging behaviour. Since rabbits often consider their pellets to be a tasty treat, try using them in a search and find game, or as a training reward. You can also use a snuffle mat or a cat/ dog treat dispensing toy so that your rabbit can benefit from the physical and mental stimulation of finding their pellets. A rabbit that goes off of their food, and especially their prized pellets, is likely not feeling well or is experiencing dental pain. Keep a close eye on their condition in case veterinary care is warranted.

To conclude, pellets can be a tasty, healthy addition to your rabbit's diet and a great way to train and bond with your little friend, but in moderation and when carefully selected to avoid harmful ingredients.



Bunny Palooza Pellet Brand Suggestions

Our Recommendations for Rabbit Pellets Available in Canada

For Adult Rabbits aged 6 months +



For Baby Rabbits & Nursing Moms



For Senior Rabbits



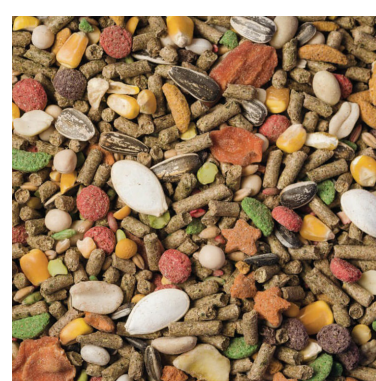
Or Reg. Adult Rabbit Food



Please Avoid:



Avoid pellets containing fruit, nuts, rice, seeds, corn, potatoes, beans, coloured bits.



AVOID Mixed-Ins
Mixes that contain dried fruits and vegetables. Anything with seeds, nuts or added sugars.