

Indiana House Rabbit Society/Heartland Rabbit Rescue

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Rabbit Veterinary Care

If my bunny doesn't need vaccinations, why do I need a vet?

The average lifespan of a domestic rabbit is anywhere from 7 to 10 years or more. In that time, your bunny might get sick or have an accident that needs medical care. It's always good to have a vet relationship established when your rabbit is healthy, so if an emergency happens, you'll know who to call.

Just like all companion animals, your rabbit will need to go to a vet sometimes. The big difference is that rabbits require a special vet – an exotics or small animal vet. Most dog and cat vets just do not have the experience needed to safely and effectively treat your rabbit.

The veterinarian you choose should be someone who is dedicated to and understands herbivores and their unique digestive systems. Their constantly growing teeth may need to be trimmed on a periodic basis by a vet who does this routinely. Rabbits react differently to medications such as antibiotics, and it takes a specialist to know what drugs are safe and when they are appropriate. For all these reasons, find a vet who knows bunnies well. Check your local phone book for a vet who specializes in exotics, or ask for a recommendation from your local rabbit rescue group. Some tips to help you choose a rabbit vet are at <http://www.rabbit.org/faq/sections/vet.html>.

When should we go to the vet?

Since rabbits are prey animals, they are masters at hiding their symptoms. Parents of a rabbit need to become very intimate with their rabbit's behavior and eating patterns. Below is a list of some symptoms that could indicate an emergency situation – immediate attention is strongly suggested.

- Stops eating
- Stops pooping or droppings become very small
- Panting with mouth open
- Drooling
- Sneezing
- Limping
- Head tilts to the side or is upside down
- Develops diarrhea
- Becomes very lethargic

If for no other reason, routine vet visits (once or twice per year) are essential for overall good health. (For more information on rabbit health, please go to www.rabbit.org or www.morfz.com.)

Central Indiana exotic animal vets recommended by Indiana House Rabbit Society:

Beth Breitweiser, DVM
All Wild Things Exotic Animal Hospital
6058 N Keystone Ave
Indianapolis, IN 46220
317-255-WILD

Angela Lenox, DVM
Avian & Exotic Animal Clinic
9330 Waldemar Rd
Indianapolis, IN 46268
317-879-8633
www.birddr.com

Alexander Wolf, DVM
Avian & Exotic Animal Clinic
622 N Earl Ave
Lafayette, IN 47904
765-446-1816