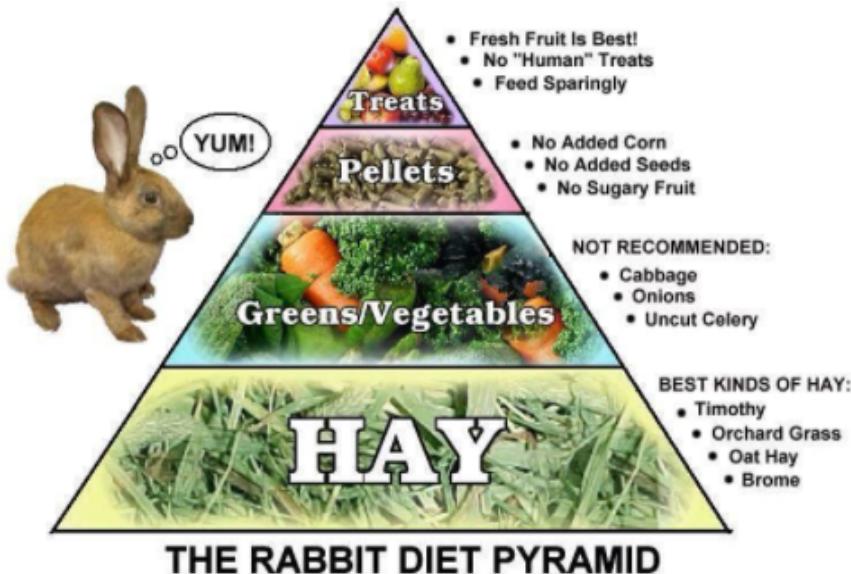


## What to Feed Your Pet Rabbit

Rabbits are herbivores and are considered grazers, so a balanced diet of hay, veggies, pellets, fruits, and fresh water will keep your rabbit healthy and happy.

At HSCC, all rabbits have constant access to unlimited timothy hay, in addition to breakfast and dinner meals of greens, a small serving of pellets, and a carrot or pepper snack. Please refer to the [rabbit food pyramid](#) to see the proportions of a healthy diet.



### # 1 Hay

The most important ingredient to a healthy bunny's diet is hay. Fresh [hay](#) should make up the bulk of your rabbit's diet and needs to be available at all times. Adult rabbits can eat timothy, grass, and oat hays, while younger rabbits should be fed alfalfa. (*Alfalfa should not be given to adult rabbits because of the higher protein and sugar content.*) Hay is important for rabbits because it provides the essential fiber needed for good digestive health (and to prevent [GI stasis](#)) and it helps wear down a rabbit's teeth (which continuously grow) for good dental health. Store hay in a dry place in a container that allows air flow to keep it from getting moldy.

**Protip:** *Using a large hay feeder is helpful because it keeps large amounts of hay dry, clean, and accessible. They can be made of [wire](#), [wood](#), or [fabric](#), and you can even use [DIY options!](#)*

### # 2 Vegetables

A varied assortment of vegetables should be a part of your rabbit's daily diet. When choosing vegetables look for something fresh and free of pesticides. Always wash your vegetables thoroughly before feeding them to your rabbit. Feed new vegetables in small quantities until you can judge if your rabbit reacts well to them. You may refer to our [feeding guide](#) for ideas.

### # 3 Pellets

HSCC recommends high-fiber, low-protein pellets such as [Oxbow Rabbit Food](#). You can feed pellets with your rabbit's daily meals, and be careful not to exceed the recommended serving size based on their age and weight. Avoid giving your rabbit pellets that have "treats" mixed in (dried corn, etc.), as these additives are never healthy for rabbits and can cause digestive problems.

### # 4 Treats

To ensure your rabbit's health they should be given only occasionally. Although branded for rabbits, many commercially-sold bunny treats are high in fat and sugar, such as yogurt chips, and should not be given. Fruit is the best option for a treat, but again you should give it only in small amounts because of the sugar content. We try to purchase organic fruits that we know are free of pesticides. Like vegetables, be sure that they are thoroughly washed. Fruit snacks should be limited to once or twice a week, and you may refer to our [feeding guide](#) for ideas.

## And of course... Fresh Water!

Fresh water must always be available to your rabbit. If you have a cage, a hanging water bottle is a fine option. Rabbits will also drink from a water bowl, and often prefer it. On a hot day, you can drop an ice cube or two in your rabbit's water dish. If your rabbit does not seem to be drinking enough water, you can leave the vegetables fairly wet when feeding.

### **What not to feed:**

Do not feed your rabbit items high in carbohydrates like breads, crackers, pasta, pretzels, cookies, chips, or cereal. Never give chocolate as it is toxic to rabbits.

## A Guide to Greens, Veggies, & More

**Yes!**

Greens	Veggies
Red + green leaf lettuce	Bell pepper
Romaine + arugula	Sprouts
Herbs (basil, cilantro, dill, mint, thyme)	Pumpkin
Wheat grass + watercress	Squash
Broccoli leaves (stems/tops can make rabbits gassy)	Carrot tops

***In moderation (as treats/no more than 10% of intake)***

Greens	Veggies	Fruits
Kale	Carrots	Banana
Beet, mustard,collard greens	Cherry tomato	Apples (no pits/seeds!)
Swiss chard	Cucumber	Berries
Spinach	Celery	Mango
Radish tops	Broccoli	Oranges
Parsley	Fennel + endive	Peaches

**\* Never! \***

Greens	Veggies	Fruits	Other
Cabbage	Brussel sprouts	Avocado	Mushrooms
Iceberg lettuce	Garlic	Lemon + lime	Bread products
House plants	Potato	Rhubarb	Dairy
	Onion, leeks	Fruit seeds/pits	Chocolate, nuts

## Gastrointestinal Stasis in Rabbits

Gastrointestinal (G) stasis is a common, life-threatening condition in rabbits. Read below to learn what it is, how to spot it, and what you can do to prevent it.

### **What is GI stasis?**

GI stasis is the slowing of passage of food through the GI tract. This is due to a change in the population of bacteria normally living in the GI tract that ferment (digest) rabbits' food. GI stasis is not typically caused by an actual physical obstruction (such as a hairball or ingested foreign object, such as a towel or rug), but by a change in GI bacteria. The contents of the digestive tract will become more compact, and the rabbit will have an even more difficult time passing it through. The bacteria can also release toxins into the system which overtax the liver and can cause the organ to ultimately fail.

### **What are the symptoms?**

If your rabbit shows any of the following symptoms, please bring them to a rabbit-savvy vet immediately:

- Loss of appetite
- Small/malformed or absence of fecal pellets
- Lethargy or hunched posture

### **What can cause GI stasis in rabbits?**

The slowdown of the digestive system can be caused by a variety of factors:

- A high starch, low fiber diet (i.e. not enough hay)
- Stress (from losing a bonded mate, a change in environment, etc.)
- Pain from underlying issues (dental problems like molar spurs, urinary tract infections, gas)
- Lack of exercise

### **What can I do to keep my rabbit from getting GI stasis?**

The best way to prevent GI stasis from developing in your rabbit is to feed a high-fiber, hay-based diet with supplemental vegetables, a small amount of pellets, and small amounts of fruit (as fruit is high in carbohydrates). The high fiber in hay stimulates normal intestinal motility. You can allow your rabbit lots of supervised out-of-cage time to encourage physical exercise to promote normal gut motility. You can also help your rabbit avoid GI stasis by having him or her checked regularly by your veterinarian who can monitor for the occurrence of other underlying diseases that may contribute to the development of GI stasis.

Finally, you can monitor your rabbit carefully at home for signs such as decreased appetite, reduced stool formation, or any other abnormal behaviors. GI stasis can develop quickly and become fatal in a matter of hours, so it is always best to seek help from a veterinarian as soon as possible if you see any symptoms or abnormal behaviors.

**Protip:** Not sure what normal/abnormal rabbit stool looks like? Check out the [BUNS guide to rabbit poops](#).