

How Do I Know If My Rabbit Is Sick?

If only our animal friends could tell us when they don't feel well! Because rabbits are prey animals, they work extra hard to hide an illness. As your rabbit's very important person, it is your job to get to know what is normal for your rabbit. This will help you to catch potential health problems before they become serious.



Here's what to watch for:

- Not eating or drinking – not even treats. If your rabbit does not eat or drink for 24 hours, he or she must be taken to a vet immediately.
- No fecals, or smaller than normal fecals or diarrhea (not to be confused with night-time cecals, which are soft, dark and resemble a cluster of grapes).
- Loud tummy sounds or no sound at all in the abdomen. Listen with your ear to the rabbit's tummy.
- Sitting in a hunched position or pressing the stomach to the ground.
- Loud tooth-grinding, which is a sign of pain. (Not to be confused with “purring.”)
- Sneezing, nose or eye discharge.
- Loud or labored breathing, noisy chest sounds.
- Scratching or shaking the ears, which could be a sign of fur or ear mites.
- Changes in litter box habits.
- Dribbling of urine or very thick white urine.
- Straining to urinate.
- High or low temperature: Normal temperature is 101 to 103 degrees Fahrenheit, or 38 to 39.6 degrees Centigrade. Learn to take your rabbit's temperature.
- Change in behavior: The bunny becomes irritable or aggressive toward you or other rabbit friends.
- Lack of curiosity: If you notice that your rabbit seems listless and not interested in his/her surroundings, it could be a sign of illness.

Tip: To find a vet who's experienced in treating rabbits, go to the House Rabbit Society's website at www.rabbit.org/vets.