

PREPARING FOR SURGERY

Taking your rabbits to the vets can often be a worrying time, however when it is for an operation the task becomes even more daunting. There are a few things you can do in the days before a scheduled procedure that can ensure your bunny is in the best possible condition:

1 Eat Well.

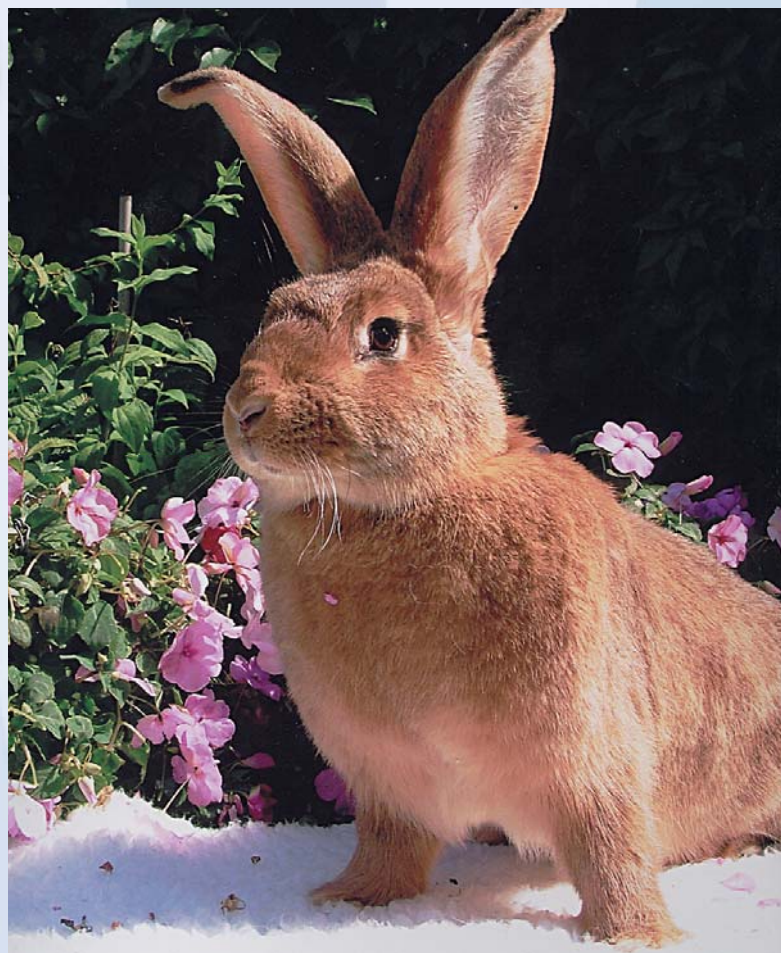
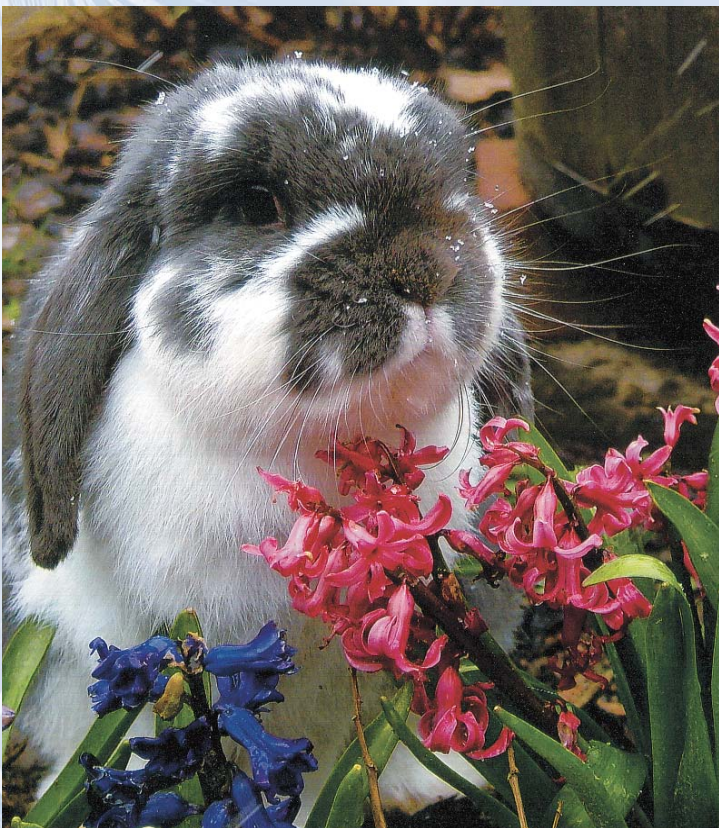
This may seem obvious, but it is vital that rabbits continue to eat well right up until you leave the house to take them to the vets. NEVER STARVE A RABBIT BEFORE AN OPERATION! No vet should advise this but occasionally some receptionists may get confused (cats and dogs should be starved before an operation) so always speak directly to the vet if you have been recommended to withhold food. Don't add new foods into the diet in the week before the procedure as this may cause digestive upset. Stick with the normal feeding routine and make sure they are eating and drinking well and passing urine and faeces as normal.

2 Support the Digestive Tract.

Pro and pre biotics may help to get the rabbit's digestive system in tip top condition in preparation for the procedure. Pro C by Vetark is a water soluble powder that can be added to the drinking water daily. This contains a mix of pro and pre biotics and vitamin C - all of which can benefit the gut in times of stress and illness. By starting this 3 days before the procedure and continuing for 5 days after, this can help the rabbits system cope with the stress and medication involved with having an operation. You must check that the rabbit is happy to drink the mixture and just offer plain water if their water intake seems to drop (although often rabbits will drink more water once this product is added).

3 Keep Calm.

It's important to keep the rabbits regime as normal as possible to avoid any extra stress. They need to come out and exercise for a large portion of the day and stick to normal feeding, exercise and grooming routines. Avoid any stressful tasks like nail cutting etc in the week before the operation (you can always ask your vet to do this whilst the rabbit is anaesthetised).



4 Stay Together.

Bonded bunnies should never be separated. Speak to your vet before the procedure and make sure they are happy to let BOTH rabbits stay for the day. Most rabbit savvy vets will know how important this is and be happy to do so. If the pair are split up, it can cause extra stress for both of them by being separated and can also cause complications when putting them back together as they will smell different. Rabbit bonds can easily be broken this way. The vet should ideally keep them in the same enclosure until the premedication is given. Then, they will be separated until the bunny has fully woken up from the anaesthetic. Once awake and eating, the rabbits are usually then re-united in the same enclosure for the recovery to continue.

5 Be Prepared.

Make sure you know what the recovery time and needs will be after the operation. Often, vets will advise that the rabbit stays indoors for the first 12hrs after a procedure so they can be closely monitored. You may need to set up an indoor cage /area for them both to stay in. Make sure the bedding is clean and dry - fleece blankets are ideal as this reduces the risk of any bedding getting stuck in any wounds. Make sure litter trays are freshly cleaned so you can monitor urine and faecal output. Make sure you have a selection of their favourite foods, herbs and treats available to help tempt them to eat. Depending on the operation performed, you may need to syringe feed the bunny. If so, your vet should advise that this may need to be done and show you how to do it. They can provide you with specialist food that mixes with warm water to allow assisted feeding. Create a 'lunch bag' of goodies to take to the vets with the bunny on the morning of the operation. Have all the normal foods including pellets, hays, herbs, vegetables and treats. This can help get the rabbit eating quicker when recovering.

Lastly, make sure you have the vets contact details including out of hours contact numbers in case of emergencies. When you collect your bunny, make sure you understand all of the aftercare instructions and have collected all of the medication (pain relief should be commonly given after most routine operations) and know if and when you need to bring the rabbit back for a check up.

