

## HAY! HOW ABOUT HAY!

A rabbit's diet is very important. Many people tend to feed the wrong pellets and not enough hay. And store-bought treats that can be very harmful to rabbits. Unfortunately, there are a lot of unhealthy items out there that are made for rabbits and marketed towards their humans, making the treats and pellets look like candy. The bad thing is that these items are often full of sugar, which can cause health problems in rabbits and can even be deadly.

At The Bunny Bunch we have cared for rabbits for over twenty years and have discovered the best diet for optimal health.

Hay plays a very important part in a rabbit's diet and should be provided at all times. It is very important that you have a good reliable source for getting hay for your rabbits.

Hay should be fed unlimited (meaning as much as your rabbit wants) on a daily basis. We pile the litter boxes full of hay every morning and evening so our buns will get as much hay as they want. Hay can also be put into hay baskets in your rabbit's pen, or around the house for extra munching. Hay is one of the most important parts of a rabbit's diet. Make sure your rabbit is eating lots of hay! If you are overfeeding pellets your rabbit will not eat as much hay, so make sure you are limiting pellets and giving the right amount based on your rabbit's weight.

We do not suggest putting hay in hay racks. While rabbits will pull at the hay and eat it, the hay consumption tends to be much less.

### Why Hay?

Rabbits need lots of fiber to keep their GI tract healthy. Hay plays an important part in keeping the intestinal tract moving. Rabbits (unlike cats) cannot vomit, so everything must pass through their GI tract. One of the most common rabbit illnesses is "GI Stasis", which occurs when the GI tract slows down or stops. You will often hear that a rabbit has a hairball, which slowed down the GI tract. The fact is, the GI tract slowed down before the hairball. Because the GI tract slowed down, the hair and other food particles did not move through the intestines or stomach, causing the rabbit pain. Rabbits in GI stasis can die within twelve hours. (Click [here](#) to read our article on GI Stasis for more important information). Eating unlimited hay and a healthy diet can help to prevent this illness.

If you notice that your rabbit has small poops, large poops, misshapen poops, soft poops or poops that have a bad smell, go to a rabbit vet right away. Often, these are signs of not enough hay or a poor diet. Your rabbit should see a rabbit savvy veterinarian right away as these signs could also be the result of an underlying illness or parasites.

## Types of Hay

**Timothy** - This is a great hay to be fed unlimited on a daily basis. Lots of nice stems with great color and smell.

**Bunny Bunch Blend™** - This is a blend of delicious Oat, Wheat and Barley. Our buns go crazy over it!

**Oat** - Another one the buns love. Lots of seed heads for munching on.

**Orchard** - A softer, fine hay that rabbits enjoy. We often give a handful as a treat.

**Alfalfa** - This hay is for the young ones only. Good for growing buns that need calcium for strong bones and teeth. We do not recommend giving this to adults, though.

## How to store hay

Hay should be stored in a cool, dry, dark location. It is very important to make sure your hay does not get damp or wet, as this could cause mold to grow, which is life threatening to rabbits and other small animals.

Hay should not be stored in an airtight container as it needs air to circulate. If you go through your hay pretty quickly (which most of us do), you can store it in a hay bin with a loose lid. Or, you may want to store it in a large cardboard box. If your hay is in a plastic bag, do not seal the bag; leave the top open.

If you have cats, make sure they do not have access to the stored hay, as they often like to use it as a litter box.

Our Bunny Bunch Boutique ships hay all over the United States. Rabbits just love it. Our supplies are also available for will call in Southern California at our location in Chino and at our many adoption and education events. Please make sure that your rabbit is getting unlimited amounts of good quality hay at all times.