



RABBIT FOSTER MANUAL

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FOSTER COMMUNICATION SHEET

Contact A Matchmaker

Matchmaker

602.997.7585 Ext. 2059
Text: 602.699.5558
foster@azhumane.org
Daily, 7:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.

Our matchmaker can help you with:

- 🐾 Pairing you with the perfect foster pet for your home.
- 🐾 Scheduling pickup for your new foster pet.
- 🐾 Answering questions about available foster pets.
- 🐾 Getting you needed supplies.
- 🐾 General questions about picking up a foster pet vs. general questions/concerns.

Schedule Appointment

Foster Concierge

602.997.7585 Ext. 2068
Text: 602.699.5455
fosterconciierge@azhumane.org
Daily, 7:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.

Our Foster Concierges can help you with all of your medical and return appointments for your foster pet(s):

- 🐾 Drop offs for surgical procedures.
- 🐾 Appointments for pet's vaccines.
- 🐾 Foster return appointments.
- 🐾 Appointments for managing ongoing medical treatments.

Medical Questions

Foster Concierge

602.997.7585 Ext. 2068
Text: 602.699.5455
fosterconciierge@azhumane.org
Daily, 7:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.

If you have medical concerns regarding your pet, we're here to help!

- 🐾 Reporting concerns and/or observations about your foster pet's recovery.
- 🐾 Answering questions about medication and/or your foster pet's treatment plan.

After Hours Emergency

On Call Medical Team

6:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m.
602.997.7585 Ext. 2053

8:00 p.m.-7:00 a.m.
602.571.3788

Please note that this is only for emergencies. You may need to leave a voice message and await a call back. Many times this is a vet taking calls from their homes, so you may get their personal voicemail. Please only use these numbers if your pet is having extreme symptoms, including:

- 🐾 Severe Lethargy
- 🐾 Difficulty Breathing
- 🐾 Seizures
- 🐾 Traumatic Injury

Behavioral Support

Behavior Team

602.997.7585 Ext. 2033
behaviorteam@azhumane.org
Daily, 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Our Behavior Team can help you with:

- 🐾 Concerns regarding your foster pet's behavior.
- 🐾 Basic training tips.
- 🐾 Finding solutions for undesired behaviors through behavior modification.
- 🐾 Tips on how to introduce your foster pet to other people and animals.
- 🐾 Advice on how to properly socialize your foster pet.

**Thank you for helping us save these precious lives!
Be sure to contact foster@azhumane.org to pick up your next foster pet.**

RABBIT FOSTER GUIDELINES

Please keep rabbits separate from owned animals for the entirety of the foster period.

Always house rabbits indoors. The Arizona heat is too much for rabbits.

Playtime should also be indoors, If she must be outside during playtime, make sure the area is fully enclosed by a fence and never leave her unsupervised – even for a few minutes!

Always supervise children around rabbits.

FEEDING

The most important component of your rabbit's diet is grass hay, such as Timothy or Brome, which keeps the intestinal tract healthy (see section on *Timothy Hay* for more on this). In addition to hay, you'll also need to provide commercial rabbit pellets *and* fresh, raw vegetables and fruit. Most bunnies enjoy: beets, broccoli, carrots, celery, green peppers, kale, parsley, radishes, romaine lettuce, spinach, apples, peaches and melons. Until they are fully grown (around 6 months), rabbits can have all the pellets they want. After that, assuming your rabbit is also eating hay and vegetables, pellets should be limited to no more than $\frac{1}{4}$ cup per 5 pounds of body weight. Look for fresh and plain pellets, without seeds, nuts or colored tidbits. And of course, fresh water in a bottle must *always* be available.

TIMOTHY HAY: A MUST!

Timothy Hay, or any other grass hay except alfalfa, is absolutely necessary to any rabbit's diet and should be made available in unlimited quantities at all times! Rabbits, like cats, are very conscientious groomers and have a tendency to get hairballs. However, unlike cats, rabbits lack the ability to vomit, which means that hairballs can become lodged in their intestines. This can be fatal! Because Timothy hay works to promote a healthy digestive system, it will help bunny break down and pass those pesky hairballs. For house rabbits, Timothy hay can also be used both as litter and as a diversion for relentless diggers. Simply fill a large tub with plenty of hay, place it in a convenient location and let your bunny munch on it, dig through it and eliminate in it. Don't worry about contamination – your bunny knows not to eat the hay from the corner in which she eliminates!

HOUSING AND EXERCISE

Many people think an outdoor hutch is the best way to keep a domestic rabbit. Rabbits, however, are highly social animals and a backyard hutch forces them to live in unnatural isolation. Furthermore, rabbits can die of heart attacks from the very approach of a predator or vandal. Finally, domestic rabbits do not do well in the hot Arizona weather. Domestic rabbits are happiest indoors in a safe, climate-controlled habitat where they have plenty of interaction with family members.

Another common misconception is that rabbits don't require a lot of space or play time. In fact, rabbits have powerful hind legs designed for running and jumping. They need plenty of out-of-cage exercise time, as well as a habitat that allows them to move freely.

To keep her happy and healthy, your rabbit will need several hours of 'free run time' outside of her habitat. Again, it is best to keep her indoors at all times. If she must be outside during playtime, make sure the area is fully enclosed by a fence and never leave her unsupervised – even for a few minutes! Cats, dogs, coyotes and even predatory birds can easily get around fencing material. Also, rabbits can dig under fences and escape.

Bunnies are also VERY smart and playful animals. Therefore, you'll need to provide your bunny with several different kinds of toys to keep her from getting bored. Most rabbits enjoy noise-making toys, such as balls with bells in them, for tossing and nudging. Mobiles and dangling bird toys are also amusing, and most rabbits will enjoy a simple cardboard box or tube for chewing on and hiding in. Even a towel can provide hours of scooting and bunching enjoyment for a rabbit. Rabbits love levels, too, so consider adding a *short* kitty tower to your bunny's play area.

CAGE ACCESSORIES

Rabbits' teeth grow constantly, so it is important for you to give your rabbit a piece of wood that she can gnaw on to wear her teeth down. It's best to provide a tree branch that has not been treated with pesticides or any other chemicals, but any piece of unpainted, untreated wood will do. Pet supply stores sell a variety of safe "chew sticks."

Other accessories they like:

- **Hide Box** – Made of rabbit-safe wood or plastic and large enough for the rabbit to jump up on top of and turn around inside of
- **High Sided Litterbox** – Large enough for the rabbit to turn around inside of and filled with paper-based litter
- **Hay Holder** – Attached to side of cage (ideally above litterbox) at mouth-height to keep hay off the ground and away from feces/urine
- **Toys** – At least two (2) different types of rabbit-safe toys

HANDLING AND GROOMING

Most rabbits don't like to be picked up - they prefer that you come down to their level. They may kick and struggle to get free which can severely injure their fragile backs. To pick up a rabbit *properly*, begin by supporting the front legs with one hand and the hind legs with the other. *Never pick up a rabbit by the ears as this can cause serious injuries.*

You will need to brush your rabbit regularly with a soft brush to remove excess hair and keep her coat in good condition. This can be easy as most bunnies love to have their nose and ears stroked.

SPAY/NEUTER

Rabbits should weigh at least 3 pounds and preferably be 4 months of age or older to be spayed/neutered. Due to their notorious breeding capabilities, rabbits should not be housed with other rabbits unless they are spayed or neutered.

INTRODUCING RABBITS TO OTHER RABBITS

Spayed and neutered or same-gender rabbits should be introduced in neutral territory under careful supervision. Rabbits can be very territorial and may fight in an attempt to defend their home.

RABBITS AND CHILDREN

Children are naturally energetic and loving. But "loving" to a small child can mean holding, cuddling or carrying an animal - precisely the things that frighten most rabbits. Rabbits can't cry out when distressed. Instead, they may scratch or bite to protect themselves. Because of this, thousands are abandoned or surrendered to animal shelters every year. Rabbits may also suffer broken legs or backs after being dropped accidentally by children. While rabbits are appropriate family companions, *an adult should be the primary caretaker and supervise all interactions with children.*

LITTER TRAINING

Most rabbits choose one corner of the habitat as their "bathroom." As soon as your rabbit's choice is clear, put a newspaper-lined litter box in that corner and fill it with Timothy hay (or any other grass hay - not alfalfa). Pelleted newspaper litters are also acceptable; however, avoid pine or cedar shavings and clay cat litters (both clumping and non-clumping) as these may result in respiratory or gastrointestinal problems. Change the litter box daily and your rabbit's home will stay fresh and odor-free!

HOME-TO-HOME HEROES



Benefits of H2H Heroes include:

- Help pets find homes faster
- Reduce the number of foster pets coming back to the shelter
- Help keep kennel space open
- Allot additional resources to the animals who need our help most

Take our H2H online training today to get started at azhumane.org/learning

Do you have an eye for matching the perfect pet to the perfect person? Or want to see how you can take your foster experience a step further?

Our Home-to-Home (H2H) Heroes program encourages foster heroes to become matchmakers and find adopters for their foster pets while still in their care, allowing foster pets to go from a foster home directly to a forever home.



FOSTER CRITTER PROFILE

GENERAL INFORMATION

Name: _____ Animal ID Number: _____

What are this pet's best qualities? _____

How long did you foster this pet? Week(s) Month(s)

What other kinds of animals has this pet lived with? (Check all that apply)
 Cat(s) Dog(s) Other

This pet lives: In a cage/hutch Free range indoors

Approximate size of enclosure: _____

BEHAVIORAL INFORMATION

Is this pet litter box trained? Yes No

Is this pet used to being handled regularly (hand-tame)? Yes No

What is this pet's most unique quirk?

Describe a "first" your foster pet experienced with you:

Is there anything else you would like us to know about this pet or your experience fostering him or her?

Please return this profile with your foster pet or send it to the Foster team at foster@azhumane.org. Please also feel free to send any good photos/videos of your foster pet to Victoria at vivankic@azhumane.org for marketing purposes, along with this profile. Thank you!