

# LET'S TALK RABBITS!

By Melanie Lyons – NY State 4-H Rabbit Ambassador

## NEWSLETTER #2

Hello, my name is Melanie Lyons. I am the NYS 4-H ambassador for rabbits. I am going to be writing this column to help newcomers understand and learn about rabbits and teach you ways to have fun while doing it. I am 13 years old and belong to Otsego county 4-H. I have been an ARBA member for 3 consecutive years.

This month I am going to talk about what you need in your basic medical kit. Some things depend on your breed. For example: if you own a breed with rex fur, you will need sore hock salve to help heal the sore hocks. Some other things you will need are antibiotics, anthelmintics (anti-parasites), cornstarch, bandages, benebac, toenail clippers, wire cutters, electrolytes; and a few things for yourself in the kit.

**Antibiotics:** Some very important antibiotics include penicillin and terramycin. Penicillin helps cure infections such as vent disease. Terramycin is topically used for eye infections such as if a rabbit cuts its eye on a feed dish or scratches its eye with a piece of hay. Terramycin also helps treat conjunctivitis..

**Anthelmintics (anti-parasites):** Wormers and ear mite medication are some examples of anthelmintics. I personally prefer safe guard wormer or Ivermectin. Most dog and cat ear mite medications work. Also, Ivermectin will work.

**Cornstarch:** Cornstarch is a good blood stopper in case a rabbit breaks a toenail or you cut it too short (cut into the pigment). Sugar and blood stop medicine are also good things that stop bleeding. Cornstarch, however is an inexpensive way and I've found the best way to help in this situation.

**Benebac:** Benebac is a paste that helps reduce or get rid of diarrhea if treated early enough. Rabbits get stressed very easily and diarrhea is a common sign.

**Toenail clippers and wire cutters:** Toenail clippers are very important to have in your kit because it is very easy for a rabbit to break its nail if they are too long. You might need to cut the nail before the rabbit injures itself more. Also, wire cutters are important in case you need to trim your animals teeth.

**Electrolytes:** Electrolytes are helpful when it comes to a rabbit that is very weak and dehydrated. Giving the rabbit electrolytes through a syringe (if too weak to drink) will boost its energy. Also, electrolytes are good to give to your rabbits at stress related events because it will keep their energy level up. Gatorade or pure electrolytes will work in these cases.

**Bandages:** Gauze, vet wrap, and ace bandages are nice to have in case of injury.

As I mentioned before, some medications are necessary for only certain breeds. Sore hock salve is mainly only needed for rex furred breeds (Rex and Mini Rex). Because it is very common for them to develop sore hocks if they don't have a board/plastic mat to sit on. Also, papaya helps prevent wool block in wool breeds. Papaya can be given fresh or in the form of chewable pills. (My rabbits love the papaya)

Finally, include hand sanitizer, Neosporin, band aids and Advil or Ibuprofen for your personal use.

Here are some fun facts for you guys involving rabbit health.

- Respiratory rate – 30 – 60 breaths/minute
- Heart rate – 130 – 325 beats / minute
- Rectal temperature – 101.3 degrees F – 104 degrees F
- Food consumption rate – 5 grams of food/100g of body weight /day
- Water consumption rate – 5 – 10 ml of water/ 100 g of body weight/day (1 ml – 1g)

A lot of this information I got from an article by Dr. Jay Hreiz. The article discusses health and it goes into depth on some basic diseases and more scientific names. If you are interested, the link is <http://www.gbfarm.org/rabbit/documents/at-home-rabbit-cavy-health.pdf>

Disclaimer: This is what has worked for me and what I have found out by researching some of the topics. I am in no way a veterinarian and as always, you should contact your vet before treating your rabbit. It is not my intention to tell you how to treat your rabbit but to give you some knowledge so when you do consult your local vet, you will have some of the things on hand that you will need. This article was reviewed by Dr. Jay Hreiz.

I encourage you to attend an ARBA show near you. Whether you show or watch, you will learn a lot. The shows are open to EVERYONE for free. Feel free to talk to breeders at the show, they are ALWAYS willing to share their knowledge of their breed. Go to [www.arba.net](http://www.arba.net) and for New York State Rabbit and Cavy Breeders Association info go to <http://www.nyrcba.com> The next NYS rabbit show is

March 9, 2013 Northeast Tri-State Club (double show) Ballston Spa, NY

March 23, 2013 Empire/CNY (Double Show) Fulton, NY

April 6, 2013 Cattaraugus County (Double Show: Triple Dwarf Hotot Show) Olean, NY

If you have any questions please email me at [mplyons@stny.rr.com](mailto:mplyons@stny.rr.com)



Breed: Britannia Petite Body Type full Arch  
Showroom Classification: black otter  
Variety: black otter Fur Type – flyback  
Class: 4-class

Breed: Checkered Giant Body Type: Full Arch  
Showroom Classification: black  
Variety: black Fur type - flyback  
Class: 6-class