

## Health Checkups

A simple checkup, as outlined below, should be given to your rabbit every 6 to 8 weeks. This does NOT take the place of a full physical exam which should also be given by your vet once a year (more if the rabbit has a condition that requires monitoring). Regular checkups are necessary for the health and longevity of your rabbit.

**EYES:** Rabbits can sometimes have a little bit of crust-like substance in the corners of their eyes; this is nothing to worry about and can be wiped clean with a cotton ball or tissue. If the eyes have a pussy discharge, the rabbit will need to be taken to a vet immediately. Other than that, their eyes should be clear and bright with no sign of discharge from their tear ducts. Note: The smaller dwarf breeds seem to have eyes that protrude more than their larger cousins. You will often find a strange substance that floats on the surface of their eyeballs. Because of the shape of their eyes, they are frequently unable to wash this material (hair and moisture) and you will need to remove it for them. NEVER use human eye drops such as Visine! If necessary, you can purchase a hypo-allergenic eye wash or Artificial Tears from the drug store and use ONE drop of that in each eye to wash the material to the corner. Often, a tissue or cotton swab can be used to gently lift the material off of the eye without using an eye wash (this should be done daily).

**EARS:** Check inside each ear for wax or dirt build-up. If ears do not appear clean, see a vet.

**NOSE:** Look for moisture or discharge around the nasal cavities or for a snotty substance inside. Even if you don't hear sneezing, if you see a slightly moist nose, check the insides of each front leg for dirty spots. Rabbits will wipe their nose with the insides of their front paws and can easily mask the early signs of pasteurella (snuffles) problems.

**TEETH:** Make sure that they are properly aligned and not maloccluded. The top teeth should be directly in line with the bottom teeth with a very slight over-bite. If the top teeth are extremely long and actually hang over the bottom, it is likely that your rabbit is maloccluded and will need higher teeth clipped (see Teeth under Health section above).

**CHIN:** Check the underside of their chin for a waxy type of buildup from their scent gland. If you find this condition, you can try to wash it off with warm water, but it will often be mixed in with their hair and will need to be cut off with cuticle scissors. Rabbits that often drink from bowls can sometimes get dermatitis, so also look for redness and irritation.

**FEET:** Check the soles of each rear foot for worn hair and for sores. This is usually the result of living on a wire floor but can also be due to an overweight rabbit sitting on hard surfaces. It is very easy for pasteurella or other infections to start in these sores so see a vet right away if they are found!

**NAILS:** Check and trim nails as needed (see Nails under Grooming section). If you find a broken nail, make sure it has healed properly since these are prone to infection. It is