

# Hop to It!

See if you qualify for a **FREE Health Check for your Rabbit or Guinea Pig\*** with Blacks Vets



By *Kate Slack RVN, Head of Nursing, Blacks Vets*

For many children, rabbits and guinea pigs enjoy treasured 'first pet' status, but did you know that ownership amongst adults is also gaining in popularity? Here at Blacks, we are certainly seeing an increase in rabbit and guinea pig patients coming through the door and we knew that we'd like to offer a service tailored perfectly to meet their needs.

Step forward, 'Hop to It!' Our new initiative to help rabbit and guinea pig owners understand more about their pets and get the most from their veterinary practice. Many of our team are proud rabbit and guinea pig owners and bring a wealth of experience to caring for our small furry friends. Hop to It aims to share knowledge, encourage questions and promote excellent standards of care. To celebrate, we are offering rabbit and guinea pig patients that are not currently registered with a Blacks Vets practice, a **FREE HEALTH CHECK\*** at one of our afternoon clinics. See our Terms and Conditions at the end of this article to apply.

In the meantime, if you're thinking about welcoming a rabbit or guinea pig to your home, here are some top tips to consider:

## Neutering

Neutering rabbits and guinea pigs is vital for a long and healthy life. Pets that are not neutered run the risk of disease and behavioural problems, such as aggression. Talk to one of our friendly team about the best time to neuter your pet and what the procedure will involve.

## Companionship

Rabbits and guinea pigs are sociable creatures that need companions to be happy. Companions should be from their own species, as mixed species pairing is not usually successful.

## Making a good match

With rabbits, mixed sex pairings usually make for the most harmonious match though same sex pairings can sometimes work. Both sexes should be neutered irrespective of pairing combination, as an un-castrated male may still try to mount his female mate leading to fighting and stress for both animals. An un-spayed female may be at risk of early death from uterine cancer.

Guinea Pigs tend to be happier in same sex pairings though a mixed sex pairing can work if both male and female are neutered.

## Housing. Why a hutch isn't enough!

When it comes to housing, a hutch alone will not provide adequate space to keep your pet happy and healthy. Rabbits and guinea pigs need a minimum of 10ft x 6ft x 3ft high (3m x 2m x 1m) of space to play and exercise in. However, a hutch can make up part of your pet's habitat as a safe space to sleep and retreat to. Hutches should have enough room for your pet to make at least 3 hops and also be able to lie stretched out. Make sure that your run has plenty of toys to play with together with other sheltered areas for protection.

## Indoors or outdoors?

Rabbits and guinea pigs can live indoors or outdoors as long as their needs are met. Outdoor pets should be shielded from weather extremes and brought inside during periods of heat and cold. They must be protected from predators with outdoor runs made of heavy-gauge mesh with secure bolts. Indoor pets also need their own dedicated space and your home must be made safe with electrical wires and poisonous house plants kept out of the way.

## Preventative healthcare

For rabbits, vaccinations are a vital part of maintaining your pet's health. Make sure your rabbit is inoculated against Myxomatosis and VHD. Rabbits are also at risk of developing Flystrike, a nasty condition that can prove fatal if not treated quickly. Thankfully, preventative treatment is available that minimizes the chance of an attack. Ask one of our

knowledgeable team for further information.

## Join today!

Rabbits are eligible to join our Protect My Pet Club and will receive great discounts on routine preventative healthcare including essential primary vaccinations and protective, Flystrike treatment.

So why not Hop to It? Bring your bunny or guinea pig in to see us and start experiencing first-class care and advice, together with great discounts on tailored products and services.

*\*Free Health Check Terms and Conditions: Only available to rabbits and guinea pigs not currently registered with a Blacks Vets practice. Medication and further treatment is not included in the free consultation and will be subject to standard charges. Free consultation appointments must be taken between 2pm - 4pm, Monday - Friday.*

# NEW PET?

**Give your pet the best start in life**

## Pet Starter Package

**FOR PUPPIES, KITTENS & BUNNIES**

- Primary vaccinations**
- Microchip for life**
- Flea, Worm & Mite treatment includes cover for lungworm**
- Full veterinary health check**
- 1 FREE emergency call out within first 3 months**
- 4 weeks FREE Pet Plan insurance**

Terms & Conditions apply. Please consult our website for further details.

ALL FOR ONLY

# £50

SAVE UP TO £200

PRICE MATCH GUARANTEE

**ALSO INCLUDES:**

- 6 month health check
- Royal Canin food
- 10% off Neutering
- 24/7 access to the Blacks Veterinary Hospital
- Free pet toy

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