

Disease Detectives

When it comes to your rabbit's health, you are always on the case. As a Disease Detective you will have to use the clues your rabbit gives to decide the disease affecting it. Pay close attention by examining your rabbits weekly and you will have no problem solving the case.

Rabbit Skill: Identifying rabbit diseases.
Life Skill: Problem solving
Success Indicator: Uses problem solving skills to recognize rabbit diseases.
Science Standard: Personal health



Eyes must be clear and clean.

“Hop to it!”

Research diseases that affect your rabbit by visiting a veterinarian or experienced breeder. Work with a friend to match the signs of illness to the proper disease. Draw lines from the diseases to the correct symptom.

Diseases

1. Ear Canker (Ear mites)
2. Snuffles (pasteurellonis)
3. Mastitis
4. Sore Hocks
5. Ring Worm
6. Wry Neck
7. Weepy Eye

Symptoms

- a. Nasal discharge, sneezing, coughing, watery eyes, rubs nose with front feet.
- b. The rabbit turns its head to one side and has a loss of balance.
- c. Shake head and flop ears. Scaly crust starting at base of inner ear.
- d. Loss of hair is usually in circumscribed patches, often starts on head but may involve other parts of the body.
- e. Bruised areas under surface of hocks. Often becomes infected or abscessed.
- f. Excessive discharge from the eye and matted fur under the eye. Rubs its eyes with its front feet.
- g. Mammary glands become hot, reddened and swollen—later may appear blue in color.



Rabbit Rap

Share What You Did

What signs of illness have you witnessed in your rabbits? What did you learn about rabbit diseases?

Process What's Important

How do you look for signs of problems in your rabbits? Why is it important to examine rabbits weekly?

Generalize to Your Life

What problem solving techniques do you use at home? School?

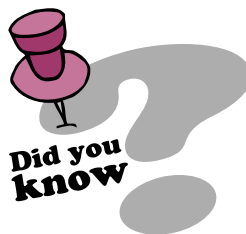
Apply What You Learned

How will you change the way you examine your rabbits? How do you monitor your health?

Acknowledgments: Written by Greg Kaase & Chad Wootton.



Additional resources:
[Vet/Books/Library/ARBA/WWW-List of Diseases & Symptoms](#)



Wry neck is caused by ear infections not skeletal disorder.

Rabbit Facts

Disease Prevention Tips

- Buy stock that appears healthy from breeders with good reputations and healthy herds.
- Provide plenty of clean, fresh water.
- Feed a healthy diet of clean, fresh feed.
- Use approved or recommended sanitary practices. Dispose of debris of all kinds.
- Check your rabbits each day and handle each rabbit once a month.
- Quarantine or isolate new animals for at least two weeks before placing them with your herd.
- Wash thoroughly after completing your rabbit chores.
- In large rabbitries where diseases can more easily be spread, keep visitors out of the rabbit buildings.
- Clean hands prevent disease for you and your rabbit.



Checking ears for cankers!

Pilot 9/15

Bounding Ahead

1. Tour your local veterinary clinic.
2. Develop a weekly disease examination checklist for your rabbits.
3. Study and give a presentation about a common rabbit disease.

Administering Medicine

Just as people do, rabbits sometimes need medicine. With practice you can learn to recognize when you can give medicine and when a veterinarian needs to be involved. Learning to give medicine is an important skill to learn. In this activity you'll practice giving medication both intramuscularly, orally and subcutaneously (under the skin).



Rabbit Skill: Demonstrate how to give medicine orally, intramuscularly and subcutaneously

Life Skill: Learning to learn

Success Indicator: Helps another youth learn to give medication to a rabbit.

Science Standard: Personal health

« Hop to it! »

Practice giving medication intramuscularly using an orange or a model stuffed rabbit such as one made with the 4HCCS Rabbit Pattern. Work with someone who has had experience. Then help another person who has not done this before learn how.

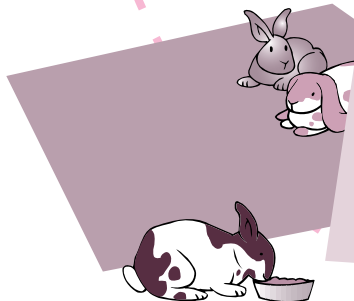
Now help someone learn how to give oral medication.

In the chart below check which diseases are usually treated orally, intramuscularly or subcutaneously.

Photo:
of giving shot or oral medicine
(kid/w orange)

Type of Medication Treatment

Ailments	Orally	Intramuscularly	Subcutaneously	Other (Name)
Ear Mites				
Ring Worm				
Wry Neck				
Mastitis				
Snuffles				
Pneumonia				
Coccidiosis				
Tapeworm				
Enteritis				



Pilot 9/15



Rabbit Rap

Share What You Did

What types of medication did you learn about?

Process What's Important

Why are medicines administered in different ways? Why is it important to learn the proper way to give medication to your rabbits?

Generalize to Your Life

How did you help someone learn rather than telling or showing them how?

Apply What You Learned

How can you use this skill to treat health problems in your rabbitry? What ways do you take medication?



Did you know

Mice, rats, birds, flies, dogs and cats are the most common carriers of external parasites and bacteria that can infect a rabbitry.

Rabbit Facts

Administering Medicine

Orally: Gently grasp the rabbit by the loose skin (with the ears included) behind its neck and tip it back, sliding your other hand under its haunches at the same time. Let the animal lean against you as if you were checking the sex. Tip the rabbit's nose up. Gently press the jaws apart with the thumb and forefinger. Place the medicine well back on the tongue. Allow the rabbit to close its mouth and then gently stroke the chin until it swallows. Liquid medication can be given this way using a plastic eye dropper to put the medicine on the rabbit's tongue.

Subcutaneous (sub-Q): The injection of medicine under the skin but not into the muscle. Care must be made not to inject into the haircoat missing the rabbit's skin. Subcutaneous injections should be given in the neck of a rabbit. To enter the subcutaneous space, pick up a fold of skin and insert the needle under the skin, parallel to the skin fold. If the needle is inserted across the fold of skin, the needle may penetrate both folds of skin and the injection will be deposited on the haircoat (or sprayed at the person holding the animal). Once the needle is under the skin, pull back the plunger of the syringe to see if air has been drawn into the syringe; if there is air in the syringe, then the needle has penetrated both skin folds and needs to be repositioned. Once the needle is in position, you can release the skin fold or keep it folded as you administer the medicine.

Bounding Ahead

1. Select two rabbit ailments from the table and report to your helper the cause, symptoms, how to control and treat.
2. Demonstrate the three methods of administering rabbit medicine to a local group.

Tipping the Scales

Like humans, animals benefit from tracking their diet and weight gain. For instance what if you were preparing to take your rabbit to a show? It would be helpful for you to record the progress of your rabbit by developing a weight chart.

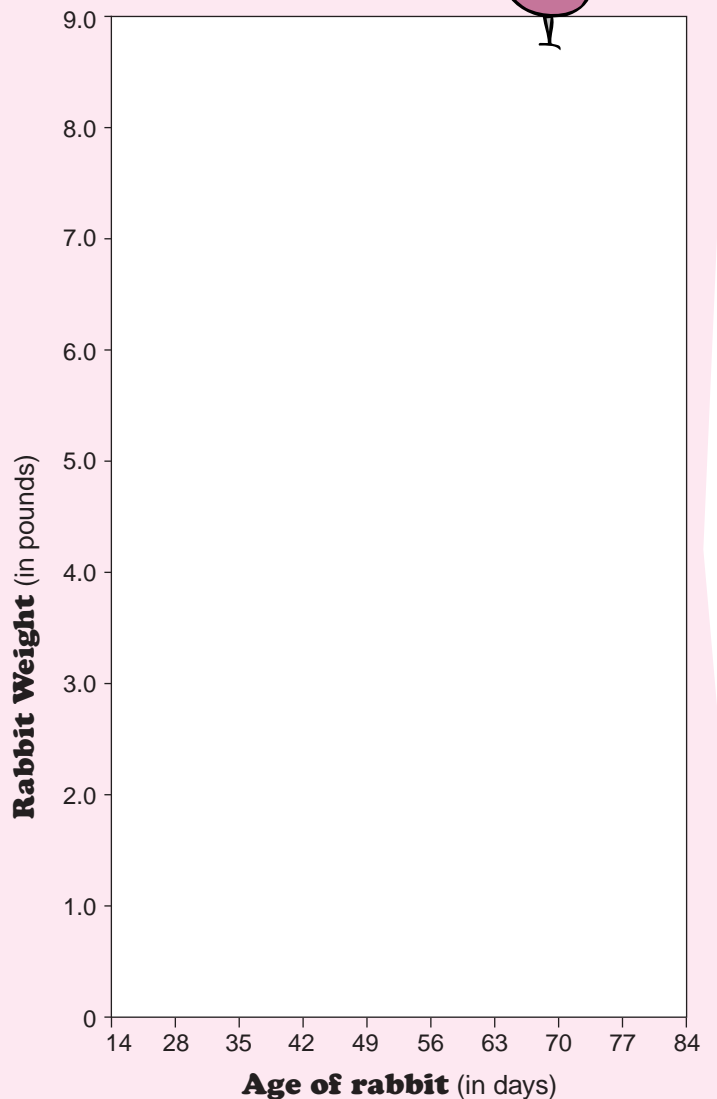
- Rabbit Skill:** Develop a weight and diet chart.
- Life Skill:** Learning to learn
- Success Indicator:** Maintains a ten-week weight chart.
- Science Standard:** Change, constancy and measurement

« Hop to it! »

1. Over a ten-week period track the weight of your rabbit and the amount of feed it consumes. Keep weekly records below:

Days of Age	Feed (oz.)	Weight (lbs.)
14		
28		
35		
42		
49		
56		
63		
70		
77		
84		

2. Now plot your findings on this grid.



Pilot 9/15



Rabbit Rap

Share What You Did

How often did you increase the amount of food during the feeding trial? How often did you weigh your rabbits?

Process What's Important

Did you notice any differences in the amount of feed consumed? Why? Why do we need to record the weight of rabbits?

Generalize to Your Life

How do your parents and doctors use your weight to make sure you are growing correctly?

Apply What You Learned

Why is it important to understand how to analyze data/information?



Did you know

The average feed conversion of rabbits is 3 to 4 pounds of feed required to produce a pound of gain.



Rabbit Facts

Feeding Guidelines

Keep breeding does and bucks in good condition. Many breeding failures are caused by does being overweight. In general, it is best to have a doe a little thin rather than having her too fat.

Pregnant does and those who are lactating require more feed. Consult an experienced breeder or a rabbit feed salesperson to determine the amount of feed needed to meet the increased nutrient requirement.

Reduce the amount of feed given to a doe 24 to 48 hours before she kindles. This will help to prevent caked mammary glands. After kindling, gradually increase her back to full feed over a seven day period.

Young rabbits need as much feed as they can eat; however, DO NOT let stale or moldy feed accumulate in the feeder.

Provide only as much feed as your rabbits will eat between feedings; any excess left in the feeder is usually wasted.

Acknowledgment: Adapted from Rabbits, Rabbits, Rabbits, Purdue University

Bounding Ahead

1. Figure feed conversion for your rabbits by dividing pounds of feed fed by total weight gain.