



Your Guide to Watering Your Rabbit(s)

General information

Dehydration can cause major medical problems. Please make sure to monitor your rabbit(s) water sources and keep them clean and fresh!

Is it hot? *Some ice added to water can help to cool down your rabbit(s).*

Switching them from one water source to another? *Continue using the original water source while introducing the new option. You can slowly take away the original water source while keeping a close eye to make sure they're using the new option.*

Changing patterns (i.e. moving things around, changing your work routine, feeding them at a different time than normal, etc.) can deter rabbits from wanting to drink from any water source. If that happens, give alternate sources of water and slowly reintroduce the desired water source type in the above manner.

It is good to have more than one water source at all times if you can.

See below for information on:

1. **Water bottles**
2. **Water bowls**
3. **Water fountains**

Water bottles

- Choosing your water bottle(s) -

There are different sizes of water bottles. If you are shopping for a new water bottle, make sure you get one of the larger sizes as the smaller ones are for smaller pets. Make sure to get the size that is proportionate to the size of your rabbit and how much they drink.



- Cleaning instructions -

It's important to properly clean and disinfect water bottles on a regular basis as over time, these can easily become contaminated by bacteria, mold, and algae which can cause significant health problems for your rabbit(s). This will also extend the life of your water bottle.

The water bottle and drinking tube should be cleaned daily with very hot water and soap. The water should be dumped, and the bottle scrubbed out with a baby bottle brush. A small wire brush can be used to clean out the drinking tube; almost anything from small food particles to mineral deposits can get stuck in there. Rinse out well with cold water afterwards prior to filling with drinking water to help the temperature of the drinking water to stay cool..

Disinfection on a weekly basis is highly recommended in order to dissolve any clinging algae or organic deposits caused by liquid vitamins or medications. The *official recommendation* is to soak the entire cap assembly in a solution of 10 parts water and 1 part bleach for 30 minutes. If you use this method, *you must make sure to rinse very well otherwise you risk poisoning your rabbit(s).*

However, we recommend soaking the *bottle* in a tea of hot water and basil leaves. *Basil is safe for rabbit(s) to consume, unlike bleach! However, as the purpose is to disinfect the bottle, please still make sure to rinse it out well as you're rinsing out any grossness within.*

The *drinking tube* can be soaked in boiling hot water or in the basil tea.

After soaking, using a cotton swab or a pipe cleaner, wipe the inside of the drinking tube, pulling any debris out towards the open end of the drinking tube. Clean the tube from both ends using this method and soak it again in the disinfectant solution or boiling hot water for about 10 minutes. Rinse the cap assembly well with hot water to remove any traces of the disinfectant solution and gross residue. Using this method, it is sometimes quite surprising how much "guck" can be removed from a drinking tube that appears to be clean.

Plastic water bottles should be hand washed in hot, soapy water and rinsed well on a daily basis. A pet water bottle brush should be used to remove any "slime buildup." It can help to think of these kinds of water bottles as being similar to baby bottles; they should be deep cleaned in the same way when changing out the water.

Glass water bottles with wide mouths can be put in the dishwasher, but a good scrubbing with a brush is also recommended. They should be deep cleaned weekly and cleaned in the same manner as plastic water bottles on a daily basis when changing their water.

- General information -

Keep out of direct sunlight; the heat will encourage the growth of mold, mildew, fungus, and bacteria.

If you do not actively change the water bottle once a day, and have more than one rabbit, please have more than one bottle within the enclosure available for your rabbit to ensure they always have access to drinking water.

If you have a family of rabbit(s) that includes babies, there should be a bottle added at a lower height for the babies when they are ready to drink water, in addition to other water bottle(s) that are at a normal height for the mom and any other bunnies in the enclosure with the babies.

Water bowls

- Choosing your bowl(s) -

Thick **stainless steel** (as long as it's not located in a direct heat source) or **ceramic** can be good options for water bowls. *Please note that ceramic bowls are more porous and can be more susceptible to bacterial growth, and should be cleaned even more thoroughly with hot water as a result.*



Look for bowls that have a **nonslip ring** on the bottom to make it more difficult for your rabbit(s) to move or flip the bowl.



Make sure to look for bowls that are **heavy, without a lip around the edge** or anything that is easy for a misbehaving rabbit to grab. *They will eventually have opinions, and attempt to move or flip their bowl to express those opinions. Choosing their bowl(s) wisely will help deter them.*

For a singular rabbit, a 4-cup sized bowl is ideal (around 6-7 inches in diameter, and 3 inches high).



A larger bowl that can accommodate around 8 cups of water (around 8 inches in diameter, and 3.5 inches high) would be good for 2-3 bunnies. If you have more rabbits, make sure to have additional water sources.

Avoid plastic. Plastic holds more bacteria than ceramic & stainless steel and cannot be sterilized in the same manner. This material is also easier for bunnies to destroy (and they will)..



Avoid slanted sides. Rabbit(s) arms are short and they need to be able to be close to the water in order to drink.

- Cleaning instructions -

Bowls should be cleaned at minimum once daily when changing out their water. Scrub with hot water and soap to ensure your rabbit(s) bowls are free from bacterial growth. Ideally, cool down the bowl with cold water prior to filling up with their water to ensure you're giving your bunny cool water.

Avoid the use of abrasive scrubbers or harsh chemicals which can damage the glaze. If the porous material underneath becomes exposed, this becomes an easy target for bacteria and mold.

- General information -

Water bowls should be changed at minimum once a day , and ideally should be changed twice a day especially during molting season and summer . Rabbits cannot vomit or cough up hairballs, and so if they consume enough fur to form a hairball that they cannot pass, this can actually be potentially fatal for your rabbit. Keeping their water clean (and area as clean as possible) helps immensely to prevent this deadly scenario.

There should be at least **one bowl per bunny during the summer** if you're not actively changing their water once per day to ensure they always have access to drinking water.

If babies have access to water bowls they should be monitored at all times as they can drown .

You may need to get a shorter bowl to make sure babies can access water to drink as they become old enough to. The water level in these accessible bowls should be lower and be changed more frequently.

Water fountains

- Choosing your fountain(s) -

Make sure it's a wireless fountain with no cords (externally or internally) that are accessible by your rabbit(s). These will typically involve a rechargeable base that can be charged up away from your rabbit(s).

Even if your rabbit doesn't have a habit or tendency to eat through cords, there is always the possibility that one day your rabbit will decide to misbehave and bite through the cord. This can cause possible electrocution, death, and/or fires at worst, and at best will cause you to have to buy a different water fountain for them.



Avoid plastic if you can. Plastic holds more bacteria than ceramic & stainless steel and cannot be sterilized in the same manner. However, because of the filtration system within, it is less likely to have problems. Make sure to clean regularly and thoroughly to avoid bacterial growth.

Your rabbit(s) may avoid the fountain if it's too loud . Consider switching to a quieter option if they aren't drinking out of it.

Opt for multiple stages of filtration where possible . This helps prevent the accumulation of fur, dust, and other contaminants that can cause medical issues for your rabbit(s).

- Cleaning instructions -

Don't forget to **check the water fountain daily** to make sure it's still charged and full of clean water.

Any filters should be rinsed well with hot water to remove fur when cleaning the device in between changing the filters according to package instructions. Follow all directions provided by

the manufacturer and thoroughly clean all parts of your fountain when refilling to avoid bacterial growth and mold.

- *General information* -

It is ideal to have a **separate water source** (bowl, or bottle) that can be used temporarily **whenever the fountain is removed for cleaning or charging** .

If you have baby rabbits, they might not be able to access this kind of water source if it is a tall enough fountain. Please make sure to have a bowl with a low amount of water (see instructions above under *Water bowls*) or a water bottle that is placed at a lower level so that it is accessible by any baby rabbits (see instructions above for *Water bottles*).