

## Indoor rabbits

If you're concerned about your rabbits being outdoors during winter, consider bringing them indoors. Litter training is easier than you may think - rabbits are creatures of habit and will quickly adapt to using a litter tray. Their territorial nature helps as they tend to mark their territory with droppings, generally in the same places. Neutered rabbits make better house pets as they're easier to train and adapt well to living indoors. Rabbits like to have their own space including an area where they can eat and sleep. Place their cage or pen in a quiet area of the room and avoid disturbing them when they're inside. Position their food close to the litter tray as rabbits sometimes eat whilst using the tray.

Choosing the right litter is very important. As rabbits like to chew it's essential that the litter is non-toxic. If the litter is dusty this can cause irritation to your pets' eyes and potentially their respiratory systems. A non-absorbent litter can lead to puddles of urine which may irritate their skin. Non-toxic, dust-free and absorbent litter that does not stick together when wet (non-clumping) such as wood litter pellets are ideal. Alternatively, a bedding material such as hay or straw placed on top of layered newspaper can be used as litter.

You'll need to make a few adjustments to your home before bringing your rabbits indoors. Rabbits love to chew and will chew through electric cables. Cover exposed wires with a protective tubing to keep your pets safe. Rabbits make fantastic house pets and they'll be happy living indoors.



## Preparing for spring

It's important to take your rabbits for a check-up. Your vet will also be able to advise you on when your pets' inoculations are due.

Check your rabbits' hutch for damage and dampness and replace the weatherproof protection if necessary.

**Because veterinary treatment can be expensive we recommend insuring your pet.**

For further information visit [petsathome.com](https://petsathome.com) or ask one of our highly trained team members at your local Pets at Home store.

## Useful items for winter

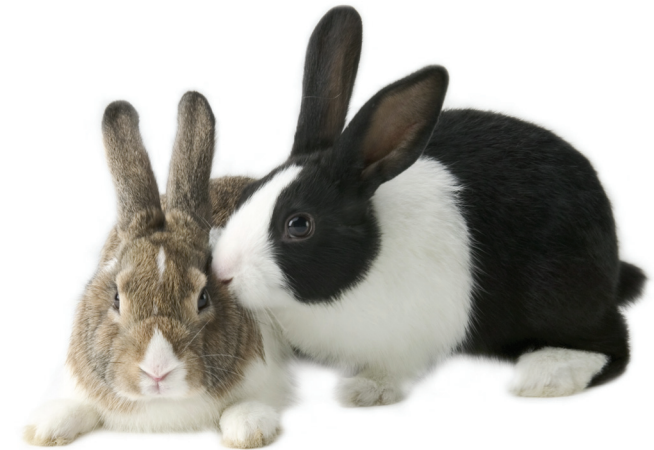
### Outdoor

- Hutch cover
- Bottle cover
- Hay bedding
- Rabbit toys

### Indoor

- Indoor rabbit cage
- Litter tray
- Litter
- Rabbit toys

# The Pets at Home guide to Rabbit Care in Winter



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at home

Your rabbits will naturally prepare themselves for the onset of the dark, cold winter months. However, as a responsible pet owner you should give your rabbits extra attention over winter. There are many factors to consider and disregarding these can lead to illness or fatalities. This leaflet contains tips on how to make your rabbits more comfortable in winter and should be read alongside The Pets at Home guide to Caring for your Rabbit.

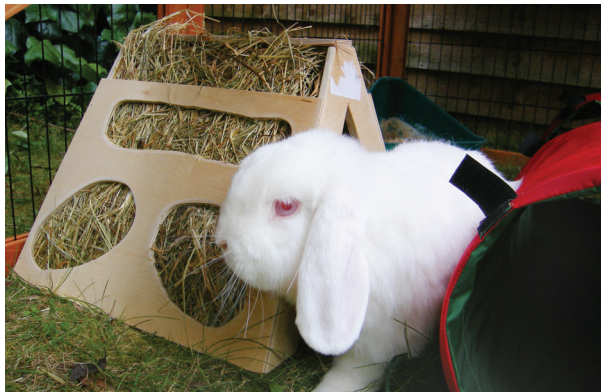
## New pets

NEVER house your rabbits outdoors if you purchase them in late autumn or winter – they won't have had a chance to build up a winter coat and may not survive.

Rabbits need company and are much happier if they have a companion to snuggle up to!

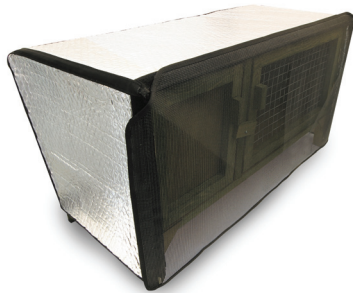
## Housing

If you keep your rabbits outdoors it's important to consider their welfare throughout the winter. Ask yourself a few simple questions to establish if your rabbits are in the most suitable place in your garden.



## Is my rabbit warm enough?

Rabbits have soft fur pads on their feet and naturally build up thick fur as they prepare themselves for winter. However, you should ensure that they have a generous supply of dry straw or hay bedding in a draught-free corner of their hutch. Never give your rabbits a blanket to snuggle up in as rabbits have a tendency to chew and this could make them ill.



Rabbits don't like to be exposed to draughts, especially at night time. If your rabbits' hutch is in an exposed area, move it so that it's sheltered from draughts and bad weather. A hutch cover will protect your pets from the wind and rain and keep their hutch warm and dry.

A hutch snuggle helps to regulate the temperature keeping your pets' home warm in winter and cool in summer!

## Should I bring my rabbit indoors?

Despite the cold weather rabbits are designed to live outdoors and although desirable, it's not essential to bring them indoors in winter. Instead, you could place their hutch in a garden shed or outhouse which will provide shelter and protection from predators. Never keep your rabbits in a used garage as the fumes from your car can be very dangerous. A secure fence around your garden will discourage predators from entering - their food supply is scarce in winter so make sure your pets' hutch is protected. Remember that the shock of seeing a predator could be fatal to your rabbits.

See the 'Indoor rabbits' section overleaf for tips on bringing your rabbits indoors.



## How can I make winter more fun for my rabbits?

Playtime is important all year round so make sure you give your rabbits lots of attention and provide them with toys and boredom breakers to entertain them. Pets at Home stocks a wide variety of fun toys for rabbits. You can also make your own toys by cutting a few holes out of a cardboard box for your rabbits to hop in and out of or provide large cardboard tubes which are great for hiding in. Rabbits enjoy having a box of hay or shredded paper to dig in. Remember that your pets require daily exercise. Never put your rabbits, especially baby rabbits, outside to exercise if the ground is cold and the grass is wet. This can lead to severe stomach upsets so it's much better to let them play somewhere safe indoors.

## Are there any changes that I need to make to my rabbits' diet in winter?

You don't have to make any big changes to your pets' diet in winter. Feed your rabbits dried forage such as dried grass and hay and suitable fresh foods from the supermarket. For a full list of recommended foods for rabbits visit [petsathome.com](http://petsathome.com). Good nutrition is very important as it promotes growth of a thick fur coat for extra insulation and can help your rabbit gain extra weight helping it to survive the winter months. Never over feed your rabbits as this could lead to obesity.

During summer rabbits gain lots of moisture from grass which is unavailable in the winter months. Therefore, you should provide your pets with a constant supply of fresh water. It's important to check their water bottle and food bowl twice a day as they're prone to freezing in low temperatures. If your rabbits are unable to drink, they'll become dehydrated leading to health problems. Adding 2-3 drops of medicinal glycerine to their water can help to prevent it from freezing. Remember to check their food for signs of frost. Refill their bowl and bottle with food and water that are at room temperature to delay the onset of frost.

A bottle snug ensures that your rabbits' water bottle doesn't freeze in winter and stays cool and algae free in the summer!

