

Spring 2020

# OLD REYNELLA VETERINARY CLINIC

Newsletter

## Welcome Back!

Hello and welcome from the Old Reynella Vet Team in 2020. With the massive changes that we have had going on around the clinic, we have had very little time to bring out a new newsletter.

## The Covid-19 Pandemic:

The pandemic has shaken the world, and our little part of the planet is no exception. You will be pleased to know that Veterinarians are considered an essential service so will be maintaining our care for your pets throughout the pandemic. We ask that if any client feels unwell or are in isolation, they respect the team and postpone, or organize alternative arrangements for presenting their pet to the practice for any level of care.

With this issue (even though it is very late) we have decided to celebrate all things exotic with a group of articles aimed at our unusual pet owners.

Should you have any questions or articles you would like to see, please contact the clinic.



One of our cute patients: Finnigan

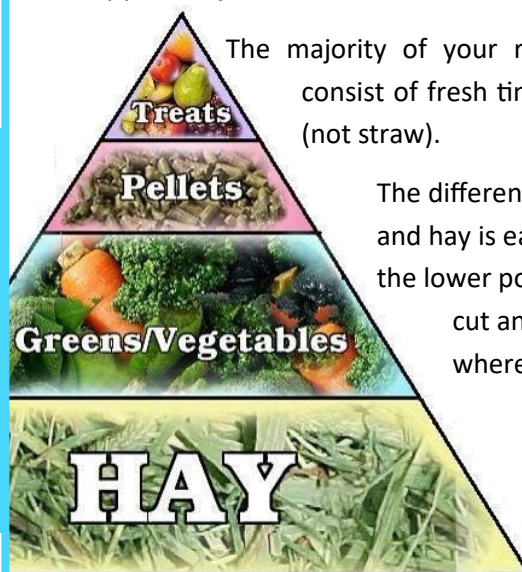
8-12 years. Rabbits have specialized diets to ensure they are in the best of health; we have provided some info here to help make the good choices for your fluffy mate.

## Exotic Pets: Feeding Rabbits

Becoming increasingly popular, Rabbits make great small pets for limited space homes, and can be litter trained to live indoors just like a cat!

Rabbits come in a variety of different breeds, and can live up to the age of

The dietary requirements for rabbits can be summarised in a food pyramid, just like us.



The majority of your rabbits diet should consist of fresh timothy or oaten hay (not straw).

The difference between straw and hay is easy to tell: Straw is the lower portion of the cut and is lower quality whereas hay is the top portion and contains flower heads and green leaves.

Hay should be fed from a feeder to prevent soiling and should be given ad lib.

Greens and Vegetables are the next most important element to a complete diet; your rabbit should be fed 1-2 cups a day. Aim for harder vegetables: eg) sweet potatoes, carrots, broccoli and cauliflower and leafy greens: eg) Kale, spinach, herbs. Flavoursome herbs (such as basil or parsley) are great to use during recovery from surgery or to stimulate a fussy or unwell rabbit.

Pellets should be fed at minimum. A 2kg rabbit should have a maximum of 50-90g of pellets per day. Avoid mixed species seed mixes entirely. We would recommend Wombaroo or Oxbow brand rabbit pellets.

Treats can be given to your bunny in very small amounts. Good treats include small pieces of fruit: banana, apple, strawberry and blueberries. Your bunny should be given no more than 1-2 treats per week.

Rabbits can have very serious repercussions if they stop eating for any reason. If you notice your pet rabbit has not eaten for 12 hours please contact the clinic immediately! Any extended period without food in rabbits is serious and must be addressed asap. 🌀

## Exotic Pets: Dental Disease in Ferrets

Dental care for ferrets is as important as it is for dogs and cats. Ferrets have one set of adult teeth that can be affected with plaque and tartar build up and may require periodic dental cleaning under anaesthetic to maintain excellent teeth and gums.



### Case study: Bear

Bear is a 9yo male ferret who presented with grade 2-3 teeth. He was no longer eating biscuits and had developed smelly breath. After his teeth were cleaned they were still stable and luckily did not require removal. Bear's diet is back to what it used to be before and he's much happier.



There are a lot of things you can do at home to keep your ferrets teeth in tip-top condition to avoid the expense of dental surgery.

**Adding Hills Feline Oral Care into your ferrets diet.** These biscuits are larger than normal and act to clean the teeth as they are chewed on. A few kibbles can be given every day to help clean the teeth and prevent plaque build up.

**Using Feline Greenie Dental Treats for Cats.** Greenies are a natural product that relies on a chemical and mechanical action to help keep teeth clean. Use a couple of pieces every day to help keep the teeth clean.

**Feeding whole prey items.** Whole prey such as velvet rats or day old chicks are excellent environmental enrichment opportunities for ferrets but also help to keep their teeth clean through active chewing. These can be purchased from pet and reptile shops.

### Free Dental Checks.

Regardless of everything you can do at home, dental health will decline over the life of your ferret. We offer free dental checks year round, so should you have

concerns, please contact the clinic to make a visit. 🌀



## Exotic Pets: Respiratory Diseases in Rats

Rats (and mice) are prone to developing a non-reversible and slowly progressive respiratory disease usually caused by a bacterial infection in the respiratory tract. The severity of the symptoms largely depend on the type of bacteria and how tough your pet's immune system is.

Being that these conditions are non-reversible and last a lifetime, prevention is better than cure.

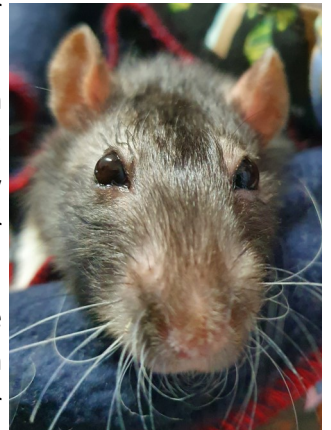
Clinical signs include: wheezing, sneezing and difficulty breathing; eye discharge; poor hair coat and weight loss.

Contributing factors which increase the risk include obesity; poor husbandry, dusty and dirty bedding and litter and lack of or inappropriate ventilation.

To minimise the risk, rodents are better kept in cages rather than aquariums to allow for more air movement. Regular cleaning to prevent a build up of ammonia

and bacteria is also vital. The use of dust-free paper bedding is advised and having cardboard boxes for enrichment as they can be disposed of routinely.

Should you notice any respiratory symptoms in your pets, keep them quarantined from any other rodents you may keep and contact the clinic for a consult.

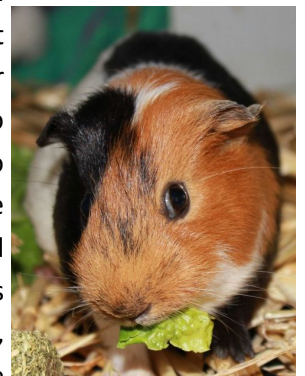


One of our nurses rats: Pam

## Exotic Pets: Vitamin C for Guinea Pigs

Like human beings, Guinea Pigs cannot make vitamin C, so they need to have dietary vitamin C provided daily. Vitamin C deficiency affects joints, skin, teeth and digestion and is an unfortunately common precursor to many diseases in Pigs.

There are pellets and liquids marketed to provide vitamin C however the vitamin breaks down quickly, particularly when the packet is opened or added to their water source. Instead, we would advise to provide new food items daily to provide a rich and far more accessible source of vitamin C. Food such as strawberries, kale, brussels sprouts, parsley, cauliflower, spinach, cabbage and oranges are great sources of natural vitamin C and can be used as enrichment for your piggy. Ensure you introduce any new food item in small amounts to ensure they do not get an upset tummy. 🌀



227 Old South Road  
Old Reynella SA 5161  
Ph. 8322 4355

[www.oldreynellavet.com.au](http://www.oldreynellavet.com.au)  
[enquiries@oldreynellavet.com.au](mailto:enquiries@oldreynellavet.com.au)