



Bunny First Aid Manual

This is an Emergency First Aid Guide for Bunnies.

This guide is not intended to replace proper veterinary care. **If you think that your bun is ill and you can get to a vet, then you should do so without delay.**

The following tips will help you through the times when this is not possible.

First aid kit – essential items

- ✓ Selection of syringes - 2ml, 5ml, 10ml, 20ml depending on your breed(s) of bunny
- ✓ **Infacol (simethicone / dimethicone)**
- ✓ **Buscopan tablets (IBS remedy)**
- ✓ **Metacam (pain killer)**
- ✓ Oral rehydration sachet (Lectade)
- ✓ **AviPro or BioLapis (pre/probiotics)**
- ✓ **Supreme Science Recovery - for syringe-feeding** If unavailable then Excel or Supreme Science pellets can be ground for syringe-feeding. (The latter are easier to grind)
- ✓ **Vegetarian (i.e. not meat!) baby food for syringe-feeding**
- ✓ **Snugglesafe heat pad (to provide soothing warmth) or a hot water bottle wrapped in a towel.** These are less efficient, lose temperature quickly and there is a risk of them being chewed so bunny must not be left unattended.

Syringes (available from good pet shops or your vet) are used for administering medicines and liquefied food in the event of a bun not eating for more than a few hours. 5-10ml syringes are easiest to use for small-breeds; 10ml or 20ml for large breeds. When syringing feed or fluids, aim towards the side of the mouth - never the throat and wait for your bunny to swallow before syringing more.

If your bun refuses food and / or sits in a hunched position this is usually a sign of discomfort. Tooth-grinding is a sign of pain. Very gently palpate

the tummy then administer two stoppers full of Infacol (available from a pharmacy and/or baby counter at the supermarket), and again in two hours if necessary. **N.B. If your bun does not respond, this is a medical emergency. Don't hesitate to call an emergency vet,**

If your bun has not defecated for 4-6 hours, administer Infacol. If your bun does not respond in two hours, administer another dose of Infacol plus a quarter of a buscopan tablet (available from a pharmacy or larger supermarket) crushed in water from a syringe. **N.B. If your bun does not respond, this is a medical emergency. Don't hesitate to call an emergency vet,**

It's always a good idea to have Metacam on hand as it is a good all round pain killer that will make your bun more comfortable until you can get to a vet (two or three drops is the usual dose). Metacam is however *only* available from the vet, so you will need to ask your vet to sell you some. If Metacam is given, ensure an adequate fluid intake - it can cause kidney damage.

In cases of confirmed GI stasis, the vet will probably perform an X-ray to check for blockages. Providing there are none then bunny will probably be prescribed a course of metoclopramide (Maxolon) by injection at 1ml/kg body weight, daily.

Senna (a laxative) can also be used. This works by stimulating the lower GI tract (whereas metoclopramide works on the upper GI tract). Prepulsid (Cisapride) is the drug of choice but is no longer available - although a few vets *might* have small, treasured, emergency supply.

GI upsets are one of the few times when antibiotics (usually Baytril) should be given orally to prevent toxins building up in the GI tract. Antibiotics are available on prescription only.

For general wounds:

- ✓ Antiseptic Solution for cleaning wounds
- ✓ Antiseptic ointment
- ✓ Dry Wound Powder (less likely to be licked off)
- ✓ Self-adhering bandages

Other First Aid essentials:

- ✓ Thermometer for (rectal) temperature-taking. Body temperature should be 39.5 deg. An increase can be a sign of stress or infection. Body temperature falls in the later stages of GI stasis or advanced illness.
- ✓ KY jelly or Vaseline to lubricate thermometer
- ✓ Latex gloves

Remember - Prevention is better than cure

1. *Always* ensure that you keep injections up to date. You should vaccinate annually against VHD, and 6 monthly against myxomatosis.
2. In hot weather, *always* help your bun to keep cool by providing shade and something cold such as a frozen bottle or a ceramic tile for them to sit on or near.
3. The main part of a bun's diet should be hay. This provides roughage to keep the digestive tract moving and keeps teeth in check.
4. Groom your bun. Many are ill from ingesting too much fur. Get a good comb and brush and groom them daily.
5. It is *vital* that you find a bunny savvy vet. In general, vets receive very little training on rabbits and small animals. Make sure you find one that knows their stuff!
6. Finally, get your buns covered by a good insurance policy from one of the specialist companies such as Pet Plan. A serious illness can cost hundreds to treat!