

WHEN BUNNY GETS ITS BUS PASS....

What do you anticipate from a pleasant retirement? Peace and quiet, cosiness, to be as healthy as possible? And that's precisely what a rabbit should look forward to, say the experts from the specialist retail chain Maxi Zoo. With a few little everyday extras, you can see to it that its retirement days are a good time for your rabbit.

Perhaps you won't notice it in your rabbit at first glance but from the sixth or seventh year of its life, it will have become a senior and needs very special attention from you. You can only recognise health problems through keen observation and thus act before the creature becomes seriously ill.

CARE AND PREVENTION

Regular check-ups at the vet's make sense. They should examine the teeth above all as dental problems are frequent and can increasingly lead to inflammations in the oral cavity. An indication of this is when your animal suddenly eats poorly. Offer it a natural, untreated twig: chewing on this will automatically care for its teeth. There is even special food available for rabbits with chewing problems. You can also help an aging rabbit with its personal hygiene by softly brushing out old and loose hair. This is a good opportunity to examine the animal for bald patches or swellings or whether touching certain areas causes it pain. The animal should be clean around the eyes and nose. Rabbits clean themselves. But if an old animal can no longer manage this because it's not mobile enough, clean its anal area with chamomile tea or baby oil.

THE RIGHT NOURISHMENT

You can make eating easier for a senior rabbit by cutting hay and plant food into small pieces for it. Apart from that, there

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is food available especially for the needs of older animals. Basically, rabbits need sufficient vitamins and minerals in their old age to keep them fit and healthy. If their coats become shaggy, for instance, supplementing their food with multi-vitamin preparations can help. Please bear in mind that seniors can put on weight very easily because they move about less.

And being overweight is extremely straining and disagreeable for any animal. So, don't give them too many treats in between meals - rather give them fewer ones which are of a high quality and nutrition.

LIGHTEN UP THE HUMDRUM

Think about how you can organise everyday life to make it more pleasant for your rabbit. Hang the drinking bowl low enough. Find an eating dish with a low edge. Treat it to an outside excursion during mild weather where it can enjoy a few rays of sunshine which are very good for the immune system. But too much heat, on the other hand, is damaging to the creature.

HEALTH CHECKLIST

- Examine your rabbit for any changes which could be a sign of illness.
- Take care over balanced, age-related nourishment.
- Make regular veterinary check-ups from five or six years of age.
- Avoid stress for the creature and instead spend more time fondling it.
- Keep an eye out for whether it needs your help with grooming and hygiene.
- Rabbits live to be about 10 years old.



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