

Jul 9 - Written By Sophia Uhlenhoff

# HOW TO GET YOUR RABBIT TO EAT MORE HAY



A free-roaming bunny

Like humans with their veggies, many rabbits struggle to eat enough hay. Because [hay is so essential](#) for bunnies' health, it can be alarming for us pet parents when we see our fur babies only picking at their stalks of fiber goodness. Read on for some ideas on how to help your bunny eat enough hay and keep them happy and healthy.

## Find Your Bunny's Favorite Kind of Hay

While bunnies under seven months of age should get alfalfa, there are lots of different kinds of grass hays adults can munch on. The most popular is Timothy, but oat hay, orchard grass, meadow hay, rye hay, barley hay, bermudagrass, and bluegrass are all good options. The best kind of hay is always the one your bunny eats the most of.

Try buying a little of every kind of hay you can get your hands on, and different cuttings too, and set up a hay buffet for your bunny. See which one she nibbles on the most and go from there.

You can also try getting your hay from different suppliers. If you're currently buying plastic bags of hay from the pet store, try finding some fresher hay from a farmer or local feed store. Generally, baled hay or hay stored in a cardboard box will taste better to your bun than hay in plastic packaging as it has better air circulation and will be less stale.

Also, avoid feeding your bunny dusty or brown hay. Not only is this hay void of nutrients, it's going to taste very icky to your bun, and she might not eat it at all.

## Mix Different Kinds of Hay

Mixing different types of hay together is a great way to encourage your bun to eat more. Not only will she enjoy the flavor variety, but it will keep her from getting too particular about her hay always tasting exactly the same.

Alfalfa hay is especially delicious to rabbits, and mixing in small amounts (less than 20 percent) is a wonderful way to get picky eaters to munch more. They'll forage through their grass hay in search of the tasty goodness, and in the process, nibble down plenty of the healthy stuff too.

## Let Your Bunny Pick the Serving Method

Some bunnies may prefer eating from a hay rack, some from a hay bag, and most straight from the litter box. Try giving your rabbit the option of all three and see which she prefers.

If your rabbit prefers a hay rack or bag, do hang it over the litter box. It's natural for rabbits to eat and poop at the same time, so having access to hay where she does her business will encourage her to eat more.

Make sure the hay rack or bag has openings large enough for your rabbit to fit her nose in and easily pull out large strands of hay. You'll also want to ensure that the rack or bag can hold a pile of hay that's at least as large as your bunny.

In a pinch, you can make your own hay rack by cutting slits in a cardboard box, and a hay bag by cutting a hole in an old tote bag.

## Give Your Bunny Fresh Hay Every Day

If you're putting the hay in the litter box, your bunny is inevitably going to pee on it. I usually try to shove the hay to the sides to minimize this, but one of my rabbits persistently hops right on top of the hay to pee.

Luckily, rabbits are smart enough not to eat the soiled hay, but because of this, you'll need to replace or top off the hay in the litter box daily.

If you're using a hay rack or bag, there's no need to change the hay daily, but do shake out any hay dust every now and then.

## Place Extra Hay Next to Your Bunny's Favorite Hangouts

Putting a little hay next to places where your bunny likes to spend most of her time, such as a favorite napping spot or hidey house, is a great way to encourage her to sneak in a few nibbles. After all, it's right there, why not take a quick bite?

To keep hay from getting everywhere, you can put it in a shallow cardboard box or basket, or stuff it in a hay bag or wicker tube.

## Mix Goodies Into Your Rabbit's Hay

Another great way to get your bunny to eat more hay is to mix her daily pellets into her hay. Pellets are very tasty for bunnies, so your rabbit will eagerly forage through the hay to get the pellets, and hopefully chomp down some hay in the process.

Sprinkling dried herbs or flowers over your bunny's hay is another good way to encourage her to eat more. Many bunnies love dried rosemary, thyme, basil, parsley, and oregano, and you can also buy pre-made flower/herb mixes from online bunny stores.

If you want to especially tempt your bunny, you can sprinkle a very small amount (no more than 1 tsp per 4 lbs body weight) of no sugar-added dried fruit pieces into the hay. Because dried fruit is so sweet (it has all the sugar of a fresh fruit concentrated into a tiny piece), your bunny will be very motivated to nose through her hay in search of the buried treasure.

Some sources recommend mixing treats into your bunny's hay, however, most commercial rabbit treats, such as yogurt drops, are unhealthy for your bun and contain harmful ingredients like added sugar and starches. If you really want to add pre-made treats to your bunny's hay, consider healthier options or look for fruit or hay-based treats with zero added sugar and free from dairy or wheat.



## Sprinkle Pellet Dust Over the Hay

If your bunny stubbornly picks out her pellets, herbs, or dried fruit without eating any of the hay itself, you can grind the pellets into dust using a food processor, high-power blender, or dedicated coffee grinder that's never been used for coffee before. Lightly mist the hay with water to get the pellet dust to stick, and then sprinkle the dust over the hay.

Now your bunny's hay will taste like her favorite pellets, and she *should* hungrily chomp away.

Make sure to throw out the wet hay after 24 hours as it will start to mold.

## Stuff Hay In Your Rabbit's Toys

Many bunnies love to play with toys, and making hay a part of their playtime is a great way to encourage them to eat more. Try stuffing hay in an empty paper towel, toilet paper tube, or a HoI-ee roller dog ball.

## Put Extra Hay Just Outside Your Bunny's Living Space

If you keep your bunny in an x-pen or have a room blocked off with a baby gate, place some extra hay just beyond the bars but within your bunny's reach. Rabbits are a lot like people in that they have a "the grass (or hay) is always greener on the other side" mentality, and love to try and grab things that are outside their areas.

Your bunny will be very interested in this "off-limits" hay and will want to pull it into her area and munch it. She may even think she's being sneaky and mischievous, which will make the hay taste all the yummier to her.

There are many ways to encourage your bunny to eat more hay, and with a little patience and lots of love, your bun will be munching down hay like a pro.

Sophia Uhlenhoff

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