

Bottled Water?

Like all animals, your companion rabbit needs unlimited access to fresh water. Most rabbits do quite well with tap water though a few of the most pampered rabbits I know are actually served bottled water. Water can be offered either from a bottle or a bowl. There are advantages to both approaches.

Rabbits will often drink more from a bowl than from a bottle. Use a heavy crock. Even these can be tossed, tipped over, run through, or played in — sometimes leaving your rabbit without access to water. If your rabbit is determined to empty his water bowl, consider switching to a bottle or having a bottle available as a backup water supply.



Bottles often work best in cages and other areas with limited room. However, if your rabbit has a truly cage-free environment, it may be a real challenge to find a way to give him access to a water bottle. Be creative. For Smokey I improvised by attaching a belt to the ironing board (stored in the laundry room where his food, water, and litter-box resided) and hanging a small (8 oz.) bottle from it.

It is important to your rabbit's urinary tract health for him to drink plenty of water. Too little water leads to more concentrated urine and less frequent urination, both of which can lead to bladder sludge and urinary tract infections. A rabbit can sometimes be tempted to drink more by adding small amounts of natural fruit juice (no added sugar) to the drinking water. You may want to try syringe-feeding water flavored with a variety of juices (pineapple, grape, apple, and cherry) or nectars (apricot, peach, and pear) to see which ones your rabbit takes willingly. When you find a flavor he likes, start with 2/3 water and 1/3 juice, and gradually reduce the amount of juice. **Caution:** If your rabbit has companions, provide a separate water source for the companions — just in case they dislike the flavor you are adding to the water!