

BA B Y BUNNIES



IF YOU FIND A NEST OF BABY BUNNIES...



IF THE NEST IS: DISTURBED

If the bunny nest was *disturbed* through your activities or by your pet:

- Repair the nest as best as you can.
 - Reconstruct the nest using grasses, hay/straw, & the mother's fur.
- Any uninjured bunnies should be left in the nest.
 - Put the bunnies right back where you found them (be sure to wear gloves when handling).
- Take the appropriate steps to protect the nest from your pet, lawn service, etc.



IF THE BUNNY IS: INJURED

- Remove injured bunnies from the nest.
- Place injured bunnies in a box with plenty of soft bedding.
- Put the box in a quiet, warm area away from pets, children, and human noises.
 - Our presence/noise can be stressful to wildlife.
 - **Note:** Constantly checking on them can actually reduce their chances of survival.
- Call/get the bunnies to a licensed wildlife rehabilitator.
- **Note:** Provide supplemental heat for any eyes-closed (i.e., newborn) bunnies.
 - Set the heating pad on low temperature under half the box.
- If the bunny is *deceased*, carefully remove it from the nest.

IF THE BUNNY IS: OUTSIDE THE NEST

- If they are alert, with eyes open & ears up, than they are old enough to be out of the nest.
- If the bunny is just out & about, leave them alone.



IF THE BUNNY IS: INSIDE THE NEST

- If you find a bunny with eyes closed & ears down (i.e., newborn):
 - Carefully put them back in the nest.
- Leave the bunnies alone in the nest if they are uninjured/alive.
- If you come across a nest of bunnies, and do not see the mother, please leave them alone.
 - Do **NOT** disturb them. This is normal behavior.

IF THE NEST IS: DESTROYED

If the bunny nest was *destroyed* through your activities or by your pet:

- Nests can be reconstructed if necessary.
- **Making a new nest:**
 - Dig a shallow hole about 3" deep.
 - Put as much of the original material (grasses, hay/straw, & the mother's fur) as you can recover into the hole.
- Nests can be moved to a safer place;
 - No more than 10' away from the original site.
- **Note:** Bunnies should never be put back into a nest that has been flooded with water, has bugs/ants visibly crawling in & out, or if a baby has been killed and there is blood in the nest.



B A B Y B U N N I E S



HOW TO KNOW IF A WILD BUNNY NEEDS HELP



ILLINOIS STATE LAW:

- It is against Illinois state law to knowingly disturb (or) relocate a rabbit's nest.
 - The mother won't know where to look for the bunnies when she comes back to feed them if they are removed/relocated.
- Removing the animal is illegal without the proper permits.
- Never take bunnies inside, feed them, or give them water.
 - Doing so can greatly reduce their chances of survival.



BUNNY BEHAVIOR

TIMELINE:

- Breeding & nesting occurs from March through September.
- Females can produce several litters (3-4) during this time.
- Gestation Period: 28-30 days



INDEPENDENT:

Rabbits are old enough to be on their own when:

Ears up

Eyes open

Able to hop

About 5 inches long



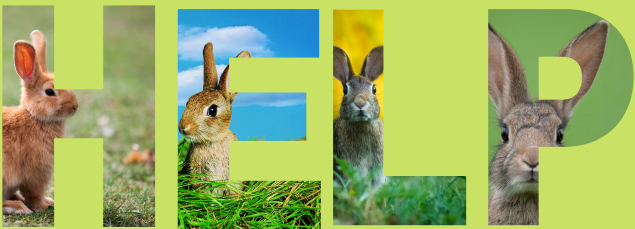
BUNNIES:

- Baby Cottontails are born without fur, but develop a full coat within 1 week.
 - *Day 10*: eyes are open
- **3-4 Weeks Old:**
 - They are weaned from the mother.
 - They begin to explore the world outside the nest;
 - Return to the nest to sleep.
- Bunnies spend much of their time alone, or with their siblings.
- **4-5 Weeks Old:**
 - Leave the family group.

ADULTS:



- **Defense Strategy:**
 - Bunnies are not constantly supervised by their parents.
 - Do NOT expect to see the mother.
 - The bunnies are NOT orphaned.
 - The mom will only return at night;
 - While you aren't watching.
 - So as not to attract predators to the nest.
- Mothers only need to feed their babies 1-2 times a day (usually at night).
 - 5 minutes a day.



SIGNS THAT A WILD ANIMAL NEEDS HELP:

Obvious bleeding

Obvious fracture/broken limbs

Severe head tilt

Eye injury:

Swollen, crusty, red eyes

Animal is rolling or circling

Adult animal is unable to stand

Maggots, parasites or fleas are present

Animal is cold, thin & dehydrated

DEBUNKING MYTHS:



- Mother rabbits will not reject their babies if they have human scent on them.
 - But if you have to handle a bunny, do so with gloved hands.
 - **Note:** handling bunnies can cause injury and stress.
- Don't assume a bunny needs help because it's sitting there or lets you pick it up.
 - They are prey animals, taught to freeze when a predator (i.e., human) approaches.
- Bunnies do not have good survival rates in captivity.
 - It is best to leave them with their mom.