



AFFILIATED VETERINARY EMERGENCY SERVICE, P.C.

15220 Southfield Road
Allen Park, Michigan 48101

Phone: 313 389-1700 Fax: 313 389-1717

aves@affiliatedvet.com

www.affiliatedvet.com

Easter Rabbits, Chicks and Ducklings

Every year huge numbers of adorable baby rabbits go to new homes for Easter, along with chicks and ducklings by the thousands. And that's bad news for the vast majority of these babies.

Most of these traditional Easter pets will be gifts for children. These are typically impulse purchases made with little thought given to the needs of the animals. No pet purchase is more likely to end tragically than one that's based on nothing more than cuteness.

Many of the chick and ducklings will die within a few days or weeks, killed by neglect, improper care or unintentional mishandling by children. Those birds that do make it to adulthood are often turned loose to fend for themselves, once parents realize how unsuitable these farm animals are as urban and suburban pets. If you're tempted by the idea of a chick or duckling, please pay attention to the following words: Get over it. Unless you have rural property, you should not entertain the idea of buying such a pet. These animals need appropriate housing, special food and access to an exercise area whether that is your house or a yard. If housed outside they need to be protected from predators who would love to add chicken or duck to their diet.

Rabbits come in a gorgeous variety of body types, fur lengths and coat markings, all united by their potential to be wonderful pets. At this time of year, baby bunnies are everywhere, with many pet stores stocking up on what has been a traditional child's gift for Easter. But before you pick up one of these baby beauties for your child, those in the business of caring for yesterday's impulsive pet purchases would like you to consider the varieties of rabbit that sadly seem most common of all: **Homeless. Unwanted. Abandoned.**

Which is why shelter and rescue groups implore you: if you're considering giving a child a pet for Easter, please think and think again. But the problem of rabbits remains. What is the biggest concern for a new pet owner? Contrary to popular belief, rabbits really aren't suitable as a pet for young children. Rabbits are fragile and can be fatally injured if improperly held. If not handled gently and with respect, they can become nippy in self-defense or fear.

For older children, though, and especially for adults, these quiet, gentle animals are excellent pets. But they do require more than a little cage outside, a water bottle and some food. You'll get a lot more out of a pet rabbit if you bring the animal into your house and your life.

As with any companion animal, the amount of proper care and time you give is paid back many times over. Here are some care tips.

--Equipment. Your rabbit needs a cage that's at least big enough to stretch out and hop around, and tall enough so he can stand on his hind legs without his ears touching the top. Bigger is better yet! If the floor is wire, at least a portion of the cage should be solid, something that will give the rabbit relief from standing on the wire all the time.

-- Exercise and play. Rabbits were meant to run, which is why the life of a caged pet can be both sad and short. Indoor rabbits can roam around the house under supervision. Outdoor pets need a half-hour activity daily in a protected area. Supervision is a must, since rabbits can be scared literally to death by cats, dogs and even jays and crows.

Cat toys, dog toys and even the cardboard tubes inside toilet paper rolls are fun for rabbits, who like to play.

Are you ready for a rabbit? If the answer's yes, for the Easter sales push and adopt one from a rescue group or humane society. You'll find lots of great pets to choose from, and you'll be saving a life.