



MegaLove: A Special-Needs Adoption Program Empowers Special People to Adopt Special Rabbits

By Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group

All bunnies need love, but some require a little extra daily care and medical intervention. This may include a prescriptive diet, medications, and more frequent veterinary visits. Long Island Rabbit Rescue has created a program to both honor the special-needs rabbits who may potentially wait longer for adoption, and to empower loving adopters to choose these deserving bunnies.

We proudly present to you MegaLove, an adoption program designed to keep special-needs rabbits happy and healthy, and their families feeling empowered and supported while caring for them.

Currently included in our MegaLove program are rabbits with megacolon. With their very delicate digestive system, rabbits require careful monitoring of their diet and diligent observation of digestive cues like input and output. Some rabbits, however, require extra care in this area. These rabbits have a digestive condition known as megacolon. They are almost always mostly white with minimal spotting around the eyes, nose, ears, and spine, but we have seen megacolon (MC) in rabbits of various colors. Rabbits with MC often stay in foster care forever as potential adopters are understandably apprehensive about



Kyle.

taking on their care. Along with the savviest of rabbit veterinarians, a group of LIRRG volunteers, foster families, and adopters with MC experience have gathered a multitude of strategies, treatments, and resources that can make caring for rabbits with MC manageable.

MegaLove program highlights:

- Financial support to help offset the extra burden of frequent veterinary intervention in these cases
- Education about MC
- Strategies for care and diet management, tailored to each individual rabbit

Adopters who meet a series of extra criteria will be considered for the

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Tillie's Easter Photo Shoot for the New York Times

By Megan Krieman

My agent called, saying that the New York Times Magazine's photo editor was interested in finding a bunny to photograph for an Easter Sunday article about the reality of living with rabbits.

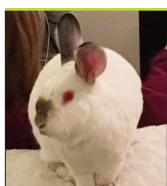
More specifically, the photo editor was looking for Cornelius the bunny. Cornelius had been a big white red-eyed rabbit who lived for many years with a photographer at my talent agency. But Cornelius had died, and my agent, Judy, thought that the magazine might be interested in my bunny instead.

"There is a prop stylist here who has a beautiful black bunny," Judy said. The photo editor asked for pictures of my Tillie, and loved how she looked. Would Tillie be available for a photo shoot?

I let the editor know that I am passionate about rabbit rescue work, adoptions and responsible ownership. I was given some background on the Easter article and assured that it would be an honest depiction of what life is like with rabbits. Tillie and I were not going to participate in some dumb bunny puff piece! I was delighted to know that this was a responsible and serious essay.

The article was titled "Rabbits," by Missouri Williams. One passage reads,

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Hester's Family Celebrates Her Eighth Year In Their Home

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First-Time Foster Mom Shares Her Observations

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Long Island Bunnies Show Off Their Finest Bunstruction

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Our masthead bunny, Bebe, may be tiny, but she is full of life. She was rescued in February after being left on the side of the road in a cage with another rabbit. Bebe's youthful energy is enough to keep any household spirited! She is available for adoption through Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group.

Masthead design: Mary Ann Maier. Photos: Katie Scarr.

Tillie

(Continued from page 1)

“I try to describe what it’s like to be with them, the moments I’m not sure I can do without. The sound of Pumpkin eating hay at 3 in the morning, or of Hero thumping her back legs on the floor so loudly she almost gets us evicted. The apricot-colored fur on the back of Mr. Rabbit’s neck. Pumpkin sleeping in a sunbeam. Hero growling at me as she eats, as if she thinks I’m going to take away her food. Mr. Rabbit binkying across the big carpet in our front room before surreptitiously ingesting one of its corners. How I’d never felt a real duty toward anything until I had rabbits.”

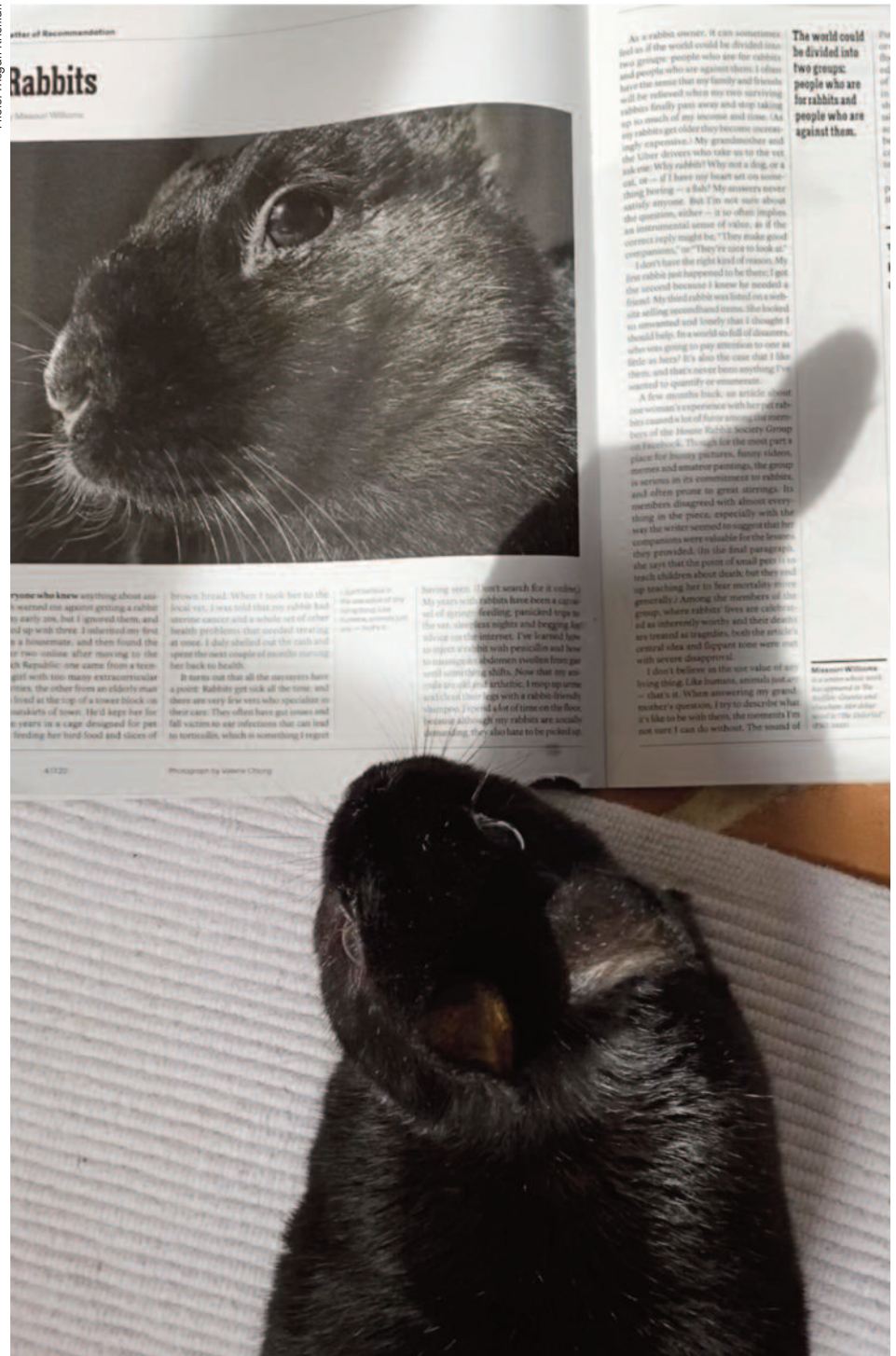
Thankfully, the photographer, Valerie Chiang, was interested in photographing Tillie at home. I wouldn’t have done the shoot if I had to take Tillie elsewhere. Valerie, a celebrity and portrait photographer, let Tillie and the natural light dictate our schedule. This was Valerie’s first shoot with a four-legged furry subject and this was Tillie’s first official photo shoot. Valerie wanted to photograph Tillie in direct sunlight. We opted for an early Monday morning with a sunny forecast. I put a plain canvas down on my bed, where Tillie basked in the sunlight and posed (with several breaks) for an hour. She didn’t pee on the set once. I was so proud.

Truth be told, I had my hands full “styling the set” and “handling The Talent.”

There was a little bit of bribery going on to get “the shot.” Valerie wanted Tillie to pose with her head high and in the best light. We used a few treats and also a spoon tapping on a dish. This is a sound that Tillie hears each morning to alert her that her applesauce is ready. It excites her and makes her stand tall, extend her neck and go wide eyed – and that’s how we got “the shot.”

Applesauce is a small daily treat that I’ve been giving my bunnies for years. I’ve found that it’s easy to slip meds into

Photo: Megan Krieman



Tillie chews/autographs the article with her portrait.

when necessary. It’s also an early indicator of illness if they avoid eating it. And now I know that it works great for bunny photo shoots.

I’ve developed a habit of marking my bunnies’ advancing age at the Easter holiday. I don’t know actual birth dates

and this is an annual date that I can easily remember. This Easter, the New York Times photo shoot provided us with a wonderful, stunning 10th birthday portrait of Tillie!

(Please see page 27 for another photo of Tillie.)

Hester: One Lucky BWB (Big White Bunny)

By Jane O'Wyatt

Hi Erin and Jane,

We're celebrating our beloved Hester's 8 year adoption anniversary and I wanted to let you guys know she's doing great! We're forever grateful to you for caring for her and introducing us. She's a strong personality in our family and we adore her. She has the run of the house and likes to be involved in everything we are doing all the time. Here she is sitting in the sun this afternoon.

Thank you again!

Breck

(Email from Breck Hostetter to Erin McElhinney and Jane O'Wyatt, April 13, 2022)

Eight years ago, when Breck Hostetter asked Rabbit Rescue and Rehab volunteers if there were any big white bunnies (BWBs) available for adoption, she and her family were still mourning their bunny Reba, who had recently died. "No one will replace Reba in our hearts," Breck wrote, "but we can give another rabbit a very happy home."

Reba had been an enormous New Zealand White who exemplified the best of her breed: "Smart, good-natured, and sociable, more like a little dog than a rabbit," according to Amy Odum, who in 2010 had introduced Reba to Breck and her three-year-old daughter Greta at ACC. For obvious reasons, rabbit adoptions to families with small children were discouraged, but there were exceptions, and in this case a combination of factors made this adoption successful. For one thing, Reba effortlessly passed the BWB size exam: it was impossible for Greta to pick her up! Here's Amy's description of the first encounter:

Reba was incredibly sweet and patient without being dull. She clearly loved just hanging around with people. She was so good with little Greta — who to her credit was a very gentle child, but was still only three years old. I think what sealed the deal for me at the time was when

Photos: Breck Hostetter



Hester.

Greta leaned over and just rubbed her whole face into the top of Reba's head right between her ears, with Reba flattened out in the classic "presentation" position. I guess it still qualified as a head rub as far as Reba was concerned — she just closed her eyes and relaxed.

At home in Brooklyn, Reba became a free-range bunny who participated in everything her doting family did. According to Breck, Reba was regarded by Greta as a sister, and "she discovered that she could stand up and bang on Greta's toy piano to get our attention to be fed. She would hop over and play it and then run into her cage and wait." Reba would be a hard act to follow.

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Greta and Reba.

Hester

(Continued from page 3)

Breck had expressed a keen interest in meeting a Californian at ACC named Hester, who had been dumped at a Petland Discounts store. Erin McElhinney described her as a “young and gorgeous rabbit” who loved being petted and was very interactive with people. Inexperienced ACC staffers judged Hester difficult and cage-aggressive, but Erin and other rabbit volunteers knew that all this bunny needed was a loving home. Then, even before Breck had a chance to meet Hester, a sudden “cat crisis” at ACC prompted Erin to ask (“no pressure,” she wrote) if Breck would be willing to foster Hester. Breck’s reply:

Sure! We’d be happy to take Hester. We were thinking we’d meet her and then make a family decision whether to adopt her, but if she needs a place right away, we can take her home as a “foster” and then, provided there are no objections at home, we will likely adopt her. (My husband is out of town for a couple of days, so I want to include him in the adoption decision).

Initially cage-protective, Hester “reared up and swatted and grunted at” Breck and charged her husband when he got too close. However, after having been warned not to, “Greta stuck her whole head into the cage to kiss Hester, and she was fine.” A bunny-whispering prodigy at three, mentored for three-plus years by Reba, Greta was the first member of her family with whom Hester felt really comfortable.

On April 8, 2014, a week after Hester arrived, Breck wrote:

Hester is awesome and I don’t think we could bear to part with her, so we’d love to adopt her. She seems to be almost completely over her cage protection issues and doesn’t seem to mind if I have my hands in there cleaning her litter box or changing her water, etc. She’s been doing some very high jumps and twists in the air, so I think she is happy! She is meticulous about using the litterbox and

Photo: Breck Hoelleter



Hester and Greta, 2014.

she’s kind of an OCD groomer, which is pretty cute. I worked from home yesterday and had her cage door open all day. She came out a couple of times to lie in the middle of the living room rug but mostly slept in her cage. She was out in the evening, though, and explored the couch and the kitchen (she just figured out where the greens are coming from). She would shyly crawl up to us to be petted. This morning she was exploring all over, but when it was time to put her in the cage and we called her with a leaf in our hands, she ran to us and hopped into her cage happily.

When told that Hester had found a home with Breck and her family and was helping them to heal the pain of losing Reba, Amy replied:

It didn’t take Hester long to figure things out. BWBs are the smartest buns! Interesting that at first she was nervous around the adults but not Greta ... Maybe adults were just more intimidating to her. If that’s the case, then Greta should get extra credit for her part in Hester’s “rehabilitation.”

Big white bunnies with pink eyes are often underappreciated and hard to find homes for. Adopters who, like Breck and her family, seek out and embrace BWBs wholeheartedly because they also value their largeness of *spirit*, are uncommon.

Hester, whose family is now gratefully celebrating her eighth year in their home, is one uncommonly lucky rabbit!

The Wild Bunnies in My Life

By Megan Hilands

When our jobs went permanently remote in 2020, my husband and I were in need of more space and decided to move to a suburban neighborhood across the river in New Jersey. We knew our bunnies would appreciate having their humans home more often – after all, more time with the humans inevitably means more attention and treats, doesn't it? What we didn't expect was that we would also come to love watching the wild bunnies outside, who conveniently seem to enjoy our yard quite a bit.

Although we know wild rabbits have many differences from our domesticated rabbits, and that especially with the threat of a deadly virus, RHDV2, our bunnies should never interact with them (even despite being vaccinated now), it is quite a joy to never be too far from a bunny, whether indoors or out. Here are some of our discoveries after observing the wild rabbits who frequent our yard.

They don't stay in the same burrow too long

Early in spring 2021, I was thrilled to discover there was a bunny burrow entrance under an old tree stump in our backyard. Then a bit later in the season I realized the tunnel seemed abandoned – but a new one had appeared under a white mulberry tree about 20 feet away. The wild bunnies seemed to love this mulberry tree last summer as it has low brush to help with hiding and to provide shade. I saw bunnies spend time around the mulberry for most of the warmer months in 2021. I'm curious about whether they'll come back to it this year!

They come out in all seasons

Last year, the wild bunnies were most active in late spring and early summer but I have seen them almost every month of the year. Even in the dead of winter they hop through the snow, almost like a small child playing. In the colder

Photos: Megan Hilands



A wild bunny enjoys a summer afternoon under the tree.



These wild bunnies would definitely win a staring contest against me!



Yes, wild bunnies have to look sharp, too!



There are few things that put me in a better mood than seeing a rabbit flop. These are the same rabbits who were engaged in the staring contest.

months, I noticed them most often just after sunset when they weren't quite as easy to see. A brown cottontail stands out a bit like a sore thumb against the bright white snow!

They have amazing staring contests

One of the most interesting behaviors I observed from the wild bunnies last summer was a series of frantic hops and dances, followed by what I can only describe as a staring contest! After internet sleuthing later, I concluded this encounter was most likely a courtship ritual.

They share body language with domesticated bunnies

I've read in the past that North American wild rabbits are genetically dissimilar enough from our domestic bunnies that they cannot produce viable offspring, and also that there are significant differences not only in body shape and size but also in parts of wild rabbits' brains when compared to their indoor distant cousins.

Perhaps unsurprisingly given they need such strong survival instincts, wild bunnies have larger amygdalas, which means they have heightened fear responses, and a smaller prefrontal cortex, which signifies less capability to regulate aggression. In short, wild rabbits are optimized for fight or flight while our pet bunnies are optimized for living peacefully alongside other bunnies and humans.

In light of all of this, I was pleasantly surprised to see wild bunnies graze, groom, and even flop peacefully while I was close enough to observe. I'd assumed given their survival instincts that wild rabbits would always sprint away when I was outside. Over time, though, I think they became used to my husband and me and realized we did not pose any threat to them. (We do keep a safe enough distance away to protect our bunnies Simba, Nala and Charlie from any diseases, though.)

I like to think that the wild rabbits sense how much we enjoy them and feel relaxed near our home, even if that is a fanciful notion. I can't wait to see what kinds of antics the wild rabbits will engage in over the next year!

Learning About Wild Rabbits

By Rabbit Rescue & Rehab

As the weather gets warmer, people often come across nests of baby wild cottontail rabbits.

Remember, wild babies are usually not orphaned. It is normal for mother rabbits to spend very little time around their nests to draw as little attention to them as possible, so if you have come across a nest, do not assume it has been abandoned and do not disturb the babies.



Wild rabbit.

House Rabbit Society has a [great article](#) that can help you learn about when a wild rabbit truly needs help.

Our organization works only with domestic rabbits. If a rabbit has been unquestionably abandoned, you should contact a specialized wildlife rehabber in your area ASAP.

Take Action on Behalf of Animals in Laboratories

By House Rabbit Society

House Rabbit Society doesn't condone animal testing. Sadly, this testing still exists in America and there are currently no laws that ensure animals have a chance to find a loving home when the animals are no longer wanted by a laboratory. Rescues and shelters should have an opportunity to save these animals.

A federal bill called the Companion Animal Release from Experiments (CARE) Act has been proposed to improve opportunities for adoption for animals previously used in laboratories. It would require that research facilities receiving funding from the National Institutes of Health develop and implement adoption policies for dogs, cats and rabbits when they are no longer used for research. It would also establish public transparency by requiring that adoption policies be made available on the website and requiring that the facility keep publicly available records on the number of animals released for adoption.

You can help make a difference by finding out more about the [CARE Act](#) and contacting your legislative [representative](#) to voice your support! And of course, by

sharing with friends and family to help spread the word about supporting this important bill.

**Help Lab Animals—
Support the CARE Act!**

The CARE Act will require research facilities that receive funding from the NIH and use dogs, cats, and rabbits for laboratory experiments to implement adoption policies for these animals when they're no longer used for research.

Contact your rep to voice support for the bill!

HOUSE RABBIT SOCIETY

New RHDV2 Case Reported

By House Rabbit Society

In mid-April, the California Department of Food & Agriculture announced that Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Virus Type 2 (RHDV2) was detected in San Luis Obispo County. Notably, this is the first detection in California since December 2021, when cases were found in wild jackrabbits in San Benito County.

Indoor-only rabbits are also at risk of the virus, since RHDV2 can be transferred to them by people (on their shoes and clothes), other animals (including dogs and cats, especially if they go outside), and even insects. Vaccinating your rabbit is the most important thing you can do to protect them from RHDV2. Talk with your veterinarian to learn more

about vaccination. Forty-four states and Washington, D.C., have authorized use of the RHDV2 vaccine from Medgene Labs.

There is no known cure for RHDV2. It is highly contagious and deadly, and the virus is extremely hardy. Visit the

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VACCINATION IS SAFE & EFFECTIVE

Medgene safety testing studies report only rare instances of temporary swelling at the injection site. Other possible side effects are a temporary fever and lethargy that resolves in 1-2 days.

RABBIT.ORG/RHDV



First-Time Foster Mom

By Christine Edwards

When my beloved bunny Nibbles passed away, I was left with a void in my life. She was very special to me and I wanted to do something to honor her memory. I thought the best thing to do was to take care of other rabbits that needed a

home and thought about fostering. However, I have another rabbit, a Lionhead named Chewy, and I was concerned as to how he would react to a new rabbit in the house. I didn't want to stress him out. After consulting with Long Island

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Photo: Christine Edwards
Nibbles and Chewy.

Our Rabbit Disapproves of Family Vacations

By Samantha Rowan

A few months after the start of the pandemic, our rabbit Lenny went for his annual wellness check at Symphony Veterinary Center in Manhattan. At the time, I mentioned to his veterinarian that Lenny mostly seemed happy to have us around more and that our bond with him was stronger. Her response was telling: Lenny's vet was not surprised that he was pleased to have more facetime with the big, hairless rabbits who made up his family, but she was also concerned about what would happen to pets when the pandemic inevitably ended. There are going to be a lot of unhappy companion animals, she predicted.

Fast forward two years when our family came back from our first vacation since the start of the pandemic. Lenny, who hadn't been apart from us for more than a few hours in two years, was angrier than I'd ever seen him in the eight years since we brought him home. Sure, we'd expected some coolness for a few hours – that was standard – but what we got was six-and-a-half pounds of fury and a rabbit who would hardly let us pet him for a few days.

It wasn't as if we had left him with a credit card and the keys and told him not to burn the place down. Lenny had a known and trusted friend with him the entire time. Before the pandemic, we had a good friend who used our



Photo: Samantha Rowan
Lenny ponders a map of the London Tube. He prefers family members to stay closer to home.

travel as a way to spend a week or so in New York and do some bunny-sitting.

We were lucky enough that our friend was able to continue his companionship with Lenny when we went to London in February. They'd always had a good bond and we thought it was the perfect answer.

And at first, it did seem like the perfect answer. Lenny behaved beautifully when we were gone and we had a few FaceTime calls with him that were probably more interesting to us than to him. But when we returned, there was a moment of happiness – I swear I saw it – and then fury. I put my things down and went to say hello and Lenny grunted and ran under the couch, where he stayed for the rest of the night.

I personally compounded the problem when I went on a work trip two weeks

later and was gone for six days. It took about two weeks for Lenny to fully forgive me and that was only after I spent hours sitting on the floor next to him and occasionally petting him when he seemed as if he wanted to interact. He grunted at me a lot and sometimes swatted me with his paws, but eventually things were OK again.

But the bigger question is this: How can we travel if a member of our family becomes that upset when we're not there? It's a question we've talked about a lot over the past few weeks and it's a dilemma. We love Lenny and we love traveling, but those things are no longer congruent.

What's more, I have to travel for work two or three times a year for four to six days at a time. I have to be away, no matter what.

While there is really no good answer for this question, we're trying to come up with a reasonable solution. Shorter vacations are one possible solution, and not traveling at all for more than a night is another potential way to handle this. The latter, however, is unrealistic, so we're going with the former by capping any family trip at five days. This approach will be tested in June, when I've got to travel again for work and the family will come along for a five-day trip. We'll keep you posted on what Lenny thinks of our plans.

Foster Mom

(Continued from page 8)

Rabbit Rescue Group, I decided that I would give fostering a try and went through the steps of filling out an application, having a virtual site visit, and signing a foster agreement. I was now ready to take in my first rabbit.

My first foster rabbit was a male Havana named Rene. He had a sweet, friendly and calm demeanor. Rene settled in nicely. However, because he moved into my existing bunny room, Chewy wasn't a big fan. I had to make sure I had enough space to maintain a good separation between pens. I also purchased tall cardboard panels that provided protection around one pen while a rabbit was out free roaming. When one of them was out, they would both try to chew through the fortress of cardboard panels to see

each other. I knew that they needed to be supervised at all times or things could get violent between these boys.

Overall, things were actually going quite well and I was enjoying my time getting to know Rene. My rabbits never liked to walk on my hardwood floor but Rene had no problem. Because of this, I had to secure the perimeter of the room so that he didn't get into trouble. After a few weeks, I received a message from LIRRG that Rene was going to go on a speed date to see if he was compatible with a female bunny named Sophie. I dropped him off and waited to find out if he was going to be a "husbun." It wasn't surprising that Sophie selected him out of the group of available boys – Rene has such a sweet demeanor. I was unsure how I would feel with Rene leaving so soon but I found myself truly happy for

him, knowing that he was going to be adopted and have a nice life with Sophie.

Now, I couldn't bear the idea of driving home with an empty pet carrier so I immediately agreed to foster another bunny. I cleaned out the pen to prepare for my next foster and within a few hours after I dropped off Rene, I picked up a little Lionhead named Juliette. Juliette made herself right at home. She is a little bundle of energy and full of personality. Luckily, Juliette does not like hardwood floors so that is one less worry. Chewy doesn't seem bothered by her, either. We are off to a good start as I get to know Juliette and I don't hesitate to text LIRRG if I have any questions about her. At some point, I may end up a "foster fail" and adopt, but for now I will cherish the time with each rabbit that comes my way. In my heart, I think Nibbles would approve.

Photo: Danielle Piazza



Cage setup: Rene (now called Dylan).

Photo: Danielle Piazza



Sophie and Dylan.

Photo: Christine Edwards



Juliette.

What Was Your Rabbit's Finest Bunstruction Project?

By Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group

Friends of LIRRG is a Facebook community of over 1,000 rabbit owners and rescue volunteers who live on Long

Island. We asked our Friends, "What has been your rabbit's finest bunstruction project? (Bunstruction... bunny construction/destruction)" and here's

what they had to say. Photo evidence of the bunstruction is included.



Miriam.

"Miriam, destroyer of anything nice and soft. Don't bother making a space cozy for her as she will not appreciate it."

– Katie S.



Alec.

"Alec likes to show off his new southern exposure window in his playhouse."

– Lisa R.



YinYang.

"YinYang consumes his houses and enjoys flipping them. I have to replace them every four weeks or so!"

– Beth H.



Maddie and Teddy.

"Maddie and Teddy: Behold, we released the couch cushions from their wrapping! It got worse but I don't have a pic from before we threw these out."

– Jacklyn L.



Virgil.

"It's not a lot of bunstruction, but I love how Virgil is all tuckered out from trying to tear apart his grandparents' Christmas present. He was so pleased with himself." – Tracey



Eeyore.

"Eeyore eats himself out of house and home literally. He eats his hutch."

– Nancy C.

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Bunstruction (Continued from page 10)



June.

“When I was fostering June, she was very hungry one day I guess. She loved the pillow. Cushions! We called her June the shredder.” – Karen R.



Pat.

“Pat de-stuffed his couch when we slept in late one morning.” – Jessica P.



Rain.

“Rain has it out for one particular corner! Good thing I rent from family!” – Krystin K.



Ellie.

“Ellie’s crowning achievement is physically removing an entire chunk of chair rail molding, but no picture of

that. But I took a photo of her napping in front of the baby gate setup that prevented her from munching on all my

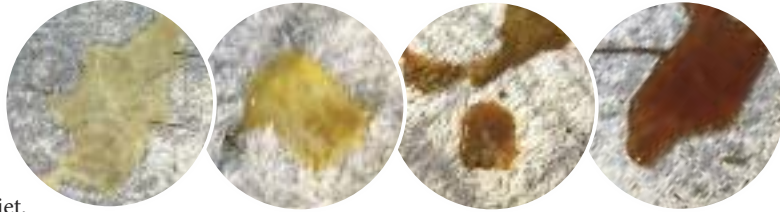
books/bookshelf (complete with blankets tucked around the rubber ends so she wouldn’t eat those, too).” – Emily V.

Rabbit Urine

Normal

Normal rabbit urine can range greatly in color. It can be pale yellow, dark yellow, a range of oranges, browns, and even rusty red. There are many factors including genetics and diet.

Even though it ranges in color, normal urine is always watery and not thick.



Calcium in urine

When excess calcium is no longer needed for their metabolism, it is excreted in the urine. Sometimes owners will notice a dried chalky white residue on bedding, at the bottom

of the litterbox, or even on fecal pellets, where they resemble powdered donuts. A watery cloudy urine of normal color is also indicative of calcium in urine. If you have concerns, talk to your veterinarian.



Sludge

Sludge is not normal. Its main characteristic is that it is thick like peanut butter or putty. Sludge is formed when calcium is retained in the bladder, causing sedimentation at the bottom of the

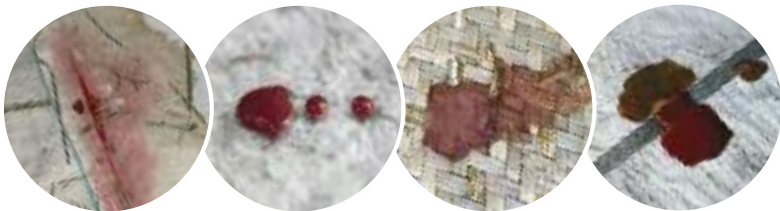
bladder. It can be common in rabbits that are obese, elderly, or arthritic and is indicative of a problem that needs to be treated by a rabbit-savvy veterinarian. Other signs of sludge include straining, dribbling urine, or avoidance of using the litterbox, accidents, etc. Sludge prevention includes encouragement of exercise, hydration (offer your rabbit water in a bowl rather than a bottle), and feeding the appropriate diet.



Blood in urine/sludge

Blood in either urine or sludge is a medical emergency. Sometimes it's tricky to discern blood vs normal rust colored urine--blood is more of a magenta

red than a rusty red. It could be indicative of a variety of medical problems, i.e., uterine cancer in an unspayed female, bladder or kidney stones, or inflammation that needs to be treated by a rabbit-savvy vet as soon as possible. Sometimes it manifests as clots, and sometimes it's spotting on their bedding or flooring.



Rabbits are a prey species, so noticing subtle, potential changes can be difficult. Whether it's your rabbits fecals, appetite or urine, pay attention to what is normal for your rabbit.

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<https://www.longislandrabbitrescue.org/rabbit-urine/>

Head Tilt (Torticollis) in Rabbits: Don't Give Up

By Dana M. Krempels, Ph.D.

*University of Miami Biology Department
House Rabbit Society of Miami*

What is head tilt? The condition medically known as torticollis (Latin for “twisted neck”) and sometimes as “wryneck” makes a rabbit’s neck twist, causing the head to tilt sideways. Sometimes, torticollis is accompanied by nystagmus, a constant, involuntary movement of the eyeballs. The direction and nature of nystagmus can help your vet determine the cause of the torticollis in order to prescribe appropriate treatment.

Signs of torticollis may develop gradually or appear quite suddenly, but the result is the same: a bunny is walking around with her head on sideways.

In severe cases, the bunny may be so disoriented that he simply cannot walk, and spends much of the time either lying on his side in apparent paralysis, or rolling in a wild attempt to regain footing. Of course, the sight of a bunny in this condition is distressing to the human caregiver. But far too many a bunny suffering a treatable case of torticollis has succumbed to his caregivers’ well-meaning desire to “not let him suffer.”

In truth, head tilt is usually not only survivable, but treatable, though recovery may be gradual. Even a rabbit with a head tilt can live a happy, comfortable life as long as there is no pain, and the bunny enjoys eating, drinking, and being loved. I would consider euthanasia only as a last resort, if all attempts to treat the condition have failed, leaving the bunny in misery, unwilling to eat, drink or act normally at all. Remember that a permanently tilted head is not a symptom necessitating euthanasia! Many rabbits with their heads tilted at a jaunty angle are living completely happy lives, running and playing with all the vigor of their straight-headed bunny pals. The most important thing is to

Photo: Mary Ann Moir



Nancy Schreiber's beloved Hillary, RIP.

Photo: Natalie Reeves



Tank.

address the source of the head-tilt symptom. Once this is accomplished, improvement of the rabbit’s posture will usually follow gradually, with physical therapy and exercise.

It is not uncommon for torticollis to appear suddenly. As with almost any illness, the more rapidly the cause of the problem is diagnosed and treated, the greater the chance for full recovery. If you do not already have a good veterinarian who is experienced with rabbit medicine,

please use the House Rabbit Society Veterinarian Listings (<http://rabbit.org/vet-listings/>) to find one in your area.

Causes of Torticollis

Torticollis is not a disease in and of itself. Rather, it is a sign of a problem with the rabbit’s balance system, components of which include the central nervous system (CNS, comprised of brain and spinal cord), the visual system, the vestibular apparatus in the inner ear, and even the pads of the feet, which tell the bunny he’s standing on terra firma. Thus, a rabbit exhibiting torticollis may have a problem with one or more of the balance components. Causes include (but are not limited to):

- middle- or inner-ear infection
- parasitic infection by *Encephalitozoon cuniculi* in the CNS
- parasitic infestation by the nematode (roundworm), *Baylisascaris procyonis*
- stroke
- abscess or tumor in the brain (i.e., intracranial abscess)
- head trauma

Successful treatment of the condition requires correct diagnosis of the problem’s ultimate cause.

Ear Infection

One of the most common reasons for torticollis in rabbits is infection of the middle- or inner ear. The vestibular system, largely responsible for the sense of balance, is located in the auditory bulla of the skull, a large, hollow space near the base of each ear. Infection in this area can cause inflammation and swelling of the soft tissues, and this can interfere with proper function of the

(Continued on page 14)

Head Tilt (Continued from page 13)

vestibular apparatus. A very severe inner ear infection can actually cause the bulla to fill with hard, caseous (i.e., of a solid, cheeselike texture) pus.

Sometimes, pus is visible inside the ear, and the vet can take a sample for identification. This will reveal

- the type of bacteria most likely responsible for the infection
- the types of antibiotics most likely to kill the specific bacteria causing the infection

Although common pathogens associated with head tilt commonly include *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* and *Pasteurella multocida*, there are many others that also can cause ear infections or abscesses. Each species/strain of bacteria has characteristic sensitivity to certain antibiotics and resistance to others. If possible, it is wise to identify bacteria so that the most effective antibiotic (or combination of antibiotics) can be administered.

Once the pathogen is identified, don't be surprised if your vet proposes to try a combination of antibiotics to kill the bacteria. A combination of antibiotics is often more effective at resolving an infection than a single one. It is especially important that your veterinarian be familiar with the specific needs of rabbits in terms of antibiotics, since some of them (e.g., any oral penicillins such as amoxicillin, and any lincosamide antibiotics such as clindamycin) can be deadly to rabbits, even if they can be used safely in other species.

Whatever the prescription, it is important to continue to administer the full dose for the full course your vet has prescribed, even if signs of disease improve. Stopping antibiotic therapy before an infection is fully controlled can select the most resistant bacteria, since they will be the

(Continued on page 15)

Photo: Jane O'Wyatt



Dizzy fka Thumpelina, during speed date at Center for Avian and Exotic Medicine, 2015.

Photo: Laura George



Dizzy fka Thumpelina, 2017, at Coming Home Animal Sanctuary. Note that her head is more upright.

Head Tilt (Continued from page 14)

last ones to die when exposed to antibiotics. If antibiotics are removed too soon, only the most resistant ones will be left to reproduce and repopulate your poor bunny's head!

Unfortunately, ear infections and head abscesses, in general, can be difficult to treat. They tend to become "walled off" and are poorly supplied with blood vessels. This makes actually getting the antibiotic where it's needed a challenge.

One antibiotic therapy that has proven very effective in many difficult torticollis cases caused by middle- or inner-ear infection is dual-acting penicillin injections. This combination of Penicillin-G (benzylpenicillin) (often combined with procaine, a local anesthetic) and Benzathine penicillin has resolved abscesses in some of our rabbits who had previously been deemed terminal and untreatable. *Pasteurella* tends to be susceptible to penicillins, but if the abscess is caused by *Pseudomonas* (or other penicillin-resistant bacterium), then penicillins will not be effective. A different antibiotic must be chosen.

While the antibiotics are doing their work, your vet might also prescribe other drugs to help restore balance and control the discomfort associated with vertigo. Meclizine can be helpful for controlling dizziness, though it will not work for every rabbit. If meclizine does not control the vertigo and nystagmus, your vet might prescribe a course of short-acting corticosteroids to reduce the inflammation interfering with the vestibular apparatus. We have found that these drugs can sometimes help restore normal posture even before the infection is fully cured. However, corticosteroids should be used with great caution in rabbits, as they tend to be more prone to the adverse side effects of these hormones than many other species.

It can sometimes take weeks or even months to completely cure an inner/

Photos: Austin Torres



Jack eating pellets, about three years ago.

middle ear infection. This may sound like a long time, but if supportive care is offered, and the rabbit continues to eat and drink normally and is still interested in life, then he's not ready to give up. The condition is disorienting, but does not seem to be painful. The illness is temporary, if hard to watch, but it's worth a course of supportive care to see your bunny happy and running around again.

The results of patiently nursing a bunny through torticollis can be very rewarding. I have nursed several rabbits through torticollis apparently due to ear infection/abscess.

- Slooby's head tilt appeared very suddenly. After only 14 days on Baytril (enrofloxacin), he was completely upright, and the condition did not recur.
- Hamish and Jamie Blue both had severe torticollis when they came to us as rescues, so we're not sure about the onset of their signs.
- Hamish had a severe ear infection due to *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* sensitive to quinolone (e.g., enrofloxacin [Baytril], ciprofloxacin, marbofloxacin) and aminoglycoside (e.g., amikacin, gentamicin) antibiotics. He retained his tilt after the infection was resolved, but acupuncture, chiropractic treatments and massage helped immensely. Still, the single most important form of physical therapy – once he stopped rolling – was regular exercise in a spacious play area where



Jack with Jenny, snuggling together.

he could run in wider and wider circles, working himself up to straight lines.

- Jamie Blue's story is similar to Hamish's: She was so disoriented that she could not stand, and spent most of her early days with us rolling in a padded pen. She had severe nystagmus. It took eight months on antibiotics to completely clear her ears of the *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* (which happened to be resistant to all the antibiotics tested except ciprofloxacin and colistin. Though she retained a slight tilt all her life, her head would go almost straight as she ran around looking at all the interesting things to see during supervised outdoor play time.

Encephalitozoon cuniculi

Although there is little conclusive evidence that this microsporidian parasite – related to coccidia and to the protists that cause malaria and other serious diseases – is truly a causative agent of torticollis, anecdotal reports and circumstantial evidence suggest that – if only in some immunocompromised rabbits – *E. cuniculi* can generate torticollis and other nervous system disorders (hind limb paresis, general weakness, seizures).

Mature *E. cuniculi* inhabit the central nervous system and renal (kidney) tissues of their definitive hosts, and infected rabbits showing signs of head tilt can

(Continued on page 16)

Head Tilt *(Continued from page 15)*

also be suffering from renal compromise due to this parasite.

At the moment, positive diagnosis of *E. cuniculi* infection can be made only upon necropsy, though histological results do not conclusively prove that the parasite was the cause of signs of illness.

A blood sample can be collected and sent to a laboratory to obtain a titer of *E. cuniculi* antibodies, produced by the rabbit in response to the presence of the parasite. However, a high titer does not necessarily indicate active disease; it says only that the rabbit has been exposed to the parasite at some time.

- A high titer may indicate that there is an active infection being battled by the immune system, or it could mean that the rabbit has the parasite under control.
- A low (or negative) titer may indicate little or no reaction to *E. cuniculi*, but this could mean either that the parasite is not present, or that the host's immune system is not mounting a response.

Some vets will send two blood samples, taken a couple of weeks apart, for a paired titer. If the titer is rising, one interpretation is that there is an active infection and the bunny is mounting a defense. If the titer is falling, it could mean that the immune system is "standing down" after defeating an infection...or it could mean that the immune system is failing to respond to the parasite. Bottom line: Antibody titers are not necessarily the final answer for proper diagnosis. Because of this, many veterinarians will simply treat for *E. cuniculi* and hope for improvement of signs.

Benzimidazole drugs (e.g., oxibendazole, fenbendazole; [albendazole is NOT recommended, as it has been associated with acute death due to bone marrow damage in rabbits and other species]) readily cross the blood-brain barrier to

inhibit the function of *E. cuniculi*'s tubulin, a protein essential for the parasite's feeding and infection of new host cells.

Ponazuril is a drug developed for treatment of equine protozoal myeloencephalitis – a horse disease caused by a parasite, *Sarcocystis neurona*, similar to *E. cuniculi*. Many veterinarians have been using this drug "off label" to treat *E. cuniculi* in rabbits, with anecdotal reports of success. I have been witness to one such case in our rescue bunny, Tilda. Tilda came to us with severe torticollis, but had no visible evidence of ear infection. We suspected that her tilt might be due to *E. cuniculi*. She was treated with fenbendazole and ponazuril concurrently for 30 days, and all traces of head tilt resolved completely, never to return.

Baylisascaris procyonis

Baylisascaris procyonis is a roundworm (Nematoda) that ordinarily inhabits the intestine of raccoons. However, if other species (including humans) ingest eggs transmitted by raccoon waste, there is a possibility of "wrong host" infection. The larval worms migrate, not to the intestine, but to the kidneys and central nervous system, causing life-threatening neurological problems.

At present, there is no treatment and no cure.

Physical Insult to the Central Nervous System

If head tilt is caused by a stroke or head trauma, the best one might hope to do is treat appropriately and hope for recovery over time. Treatment must be administered quickly at the onset of signs for best hope of a good prognosis.

If the problem is believed to be caused by an intracranial abscess, with no pus to culture, your vet might wish to try dual-acting penicillin (as described above).

The Benefits of Physical Therapy

Once medical treatments are starting to do their work, your bunny can benefit from regular exercise and physical therapy. Allowing the bunny to run in a very large area, where he can move in straight lines (not small circles) can make a significant difference, and speed healing.

Physical Therapist Larry Gavlak shares his hints for physical therapy that helped his bunny (Boper) regain his balance. Larry has used the same technique on humans who had lost their sense of balance, and he simply translated and scaled it for his bunny!

(http://www.bio.miami.edu/hare/tilt_therapy.html)

Don't Give Up

Many, many people have written to me, asking about head tilt. I'm happy to say that almost every one of them has written back to say that patience, loving husbandry and the proper medicine and physical therapy had their bunnies up and running again, even if it took weeks or even months. Everyone said it was worth the time and care.

Treatment of head tilt is not only possible, but often successful and rewarding. It might help to realize that rabbits do not mourn over what might have been, nor what the future might hold. If your rabbit is willing to survive the moment, is eating and drinking and showing affection and interest in life (however dizzily), he or she deserves a chance to heal. It is so rewarding to see a head tilt bunny race and frolic as before, even if it takes several months of treatment and love.

MegaLove

(Continued from page 1)

MegaLove program. We believe that our foster rabbits who have medical issues are very special. Therefore, their adopters need to be very special, too.

Meet Our MegaLove Bunnies

These rabbits have a digestive disorder called megacolon (MC) and are part of our MegaLove adoption program. To learn more about MC and to see if caring for a MC rabbit is right for you, please read our educational page: Recognizing and Managing Megacolon in Rabbits.

Charlene

Charlene was rescued in Suffolk County in April 2021. She is small, soft and sweet. She can be shy and will just ask her adoptive humans for a little time, patience and quiet to warm up to new people.

With her silky smooth fur, she is easily the softest bunny you will ever feel. She LOVES toys, giving kisses, lounging, gentle petting and is just a joy to have around.

- Rescued April 2021
- Estimated age upon rescue: 1 year
- Exceptionally neat
- Cat-friendly

Miriam

Miriam was part of a large, difficult rescue case in Ronkonkoma in May 2018. She is a sweet lady with convertible ears – sometimes up, sometimes down and sometimes straight out to the side.

This girl will brighten up your day with her exciting binky shows and desire to sit with you for head pats. Don't let this sweet face fool you, though, as she is a happy trouble-maker at heart. Her adopter will need to seriously bunny-proof.

- Rescued May 2018
- Estimated age upon rescue: 1 year
- Cat-friendly
- Active, trouble-maker



Charlene.



Miriam.



Sterling.

Sterling

Sterling was abandoned in Nassau County in the winter of 2021. A caring resident was able to bring him to safety.

Sterling lives up to his name. He is a first-rate example of what a companion animal should be: sweet, loving, and playful. Volunteers describe him as a “wacky dude who is not afraid to get weird!” You'll often find him standing up on his hind legs, puppy-like, craving for attention. If you're looking for a rabbit who will be very excited to greet you and play, Sterling is your man!

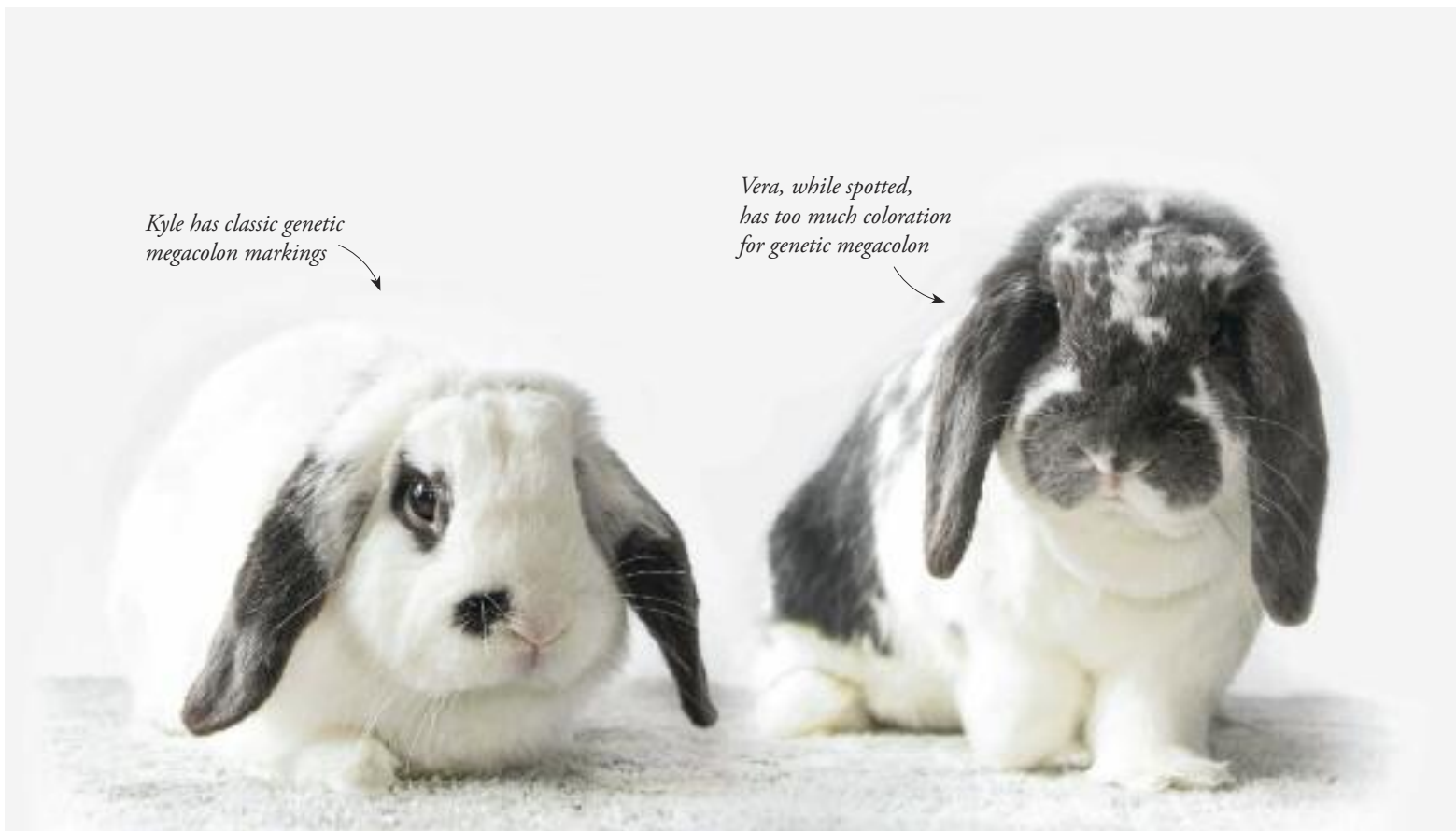
- Rescued Winter 2021
- Estimated age upon rescue: 11 months
- Excellent litter-box habits
- Enjoys being read to
- Sweet/gentle
- Loves to explore with a cautious curiosity
- Will hop into your lap for gentle head/ear pets. If you're looking for somebunny to Netflix binge with, Sterling will happily join you.
- Not a fan of dogs so is looking for a home without one

Kyle (see photo on page 1)

Kyle was abandoned at the Selden, N.Y., Petco with a female rabbit. The next day, the employees discovered that the female had given birth and sadly, she and both her kits had died. Thankfully, Kyle is now thriving in foster care. Although understandably shy because of his ordeal, he will run up to you and nudge you for attention.

Kyle is an entertainer. His quirky, happy touch-me-on-my-terms personality will nicely suit an adopter who simply enjoys watching his antics. He's the type of rabbit that may appreciate being read to by calm children who can understand his boundaries.

- Rescued June 2021
- Estimated age upon rescue: 15 months old



Kyle has classic genetic megacolon markings

Vera, while spotted, has too much coloration for genetic megacolon

Recognizing and Managing Megacolon in Rabbits

What is Megacolon (MC)?

MC is a genetic digestive condition that affects the function of a rabbit's gastrointestinal (GI) tract in rabbits with certain genes. The condition is progressive and each rabbit may be affected differently, showing varying degrees of symptoms at different life stages. Rarely, rabbits may develop MC from trauma, surgery, or injury ("acquired MC").

So what does this mean for an MC rabbit?

These bunnies are predisposed to gut problems and have trouble absorbing essential nutrients from food. While some may remain healthy for the first few years of their lives, others will show symptoms from birth. Many MC rabbits will show worsening symptoms around the age of 3-5 years. Detecting and treating the condition at the onset of symptoms and as early in their lives as possible is essential to keeping them happy and healthy. However, humane euthanasia in severe cases may be recommended.

One of the most common ailments that affects MC rabbits is impaction of the gut due to slow motility. If left untreated, the colon can become severely distended and painful for the rabbit. These slowdowns can lead to serious gut infections and death. At some point in most MC rabbits' lives, daily oral medications will be necessary. This can include medications for managing pain, motility, and/or softening stool.

How do you know if you have an MC rabbit?

There are currently no tests that can diagnose MC. Instead, we look at coat coloration, fecal/cecal output, and ruling out other conditions that may present similar symptoms. Typically, genetic MC rabbits are mostly white with some spotting around the eyes, nose, ears, and spine. Not every rabbit with this coloration will have this condition.

A healthy rabbit's fecals are consistently spherical with little to no varying in size/shape, they are not overly small or large for the rabbit's size, and aren't too dry or too wet in consistency. You may have a megacolon rabbit if his typical fecal output is very large, misshapen, or varies in size. Sometimes fecals are overly dry, or conversely, they can be overly moist.



Cecotropes of a healthy rabbit come in shiny clusters that resemble the size, shape, and lustre of a blackberry. The cecotropes of an MC rabbit are overly large, and can be sausage-like in shape, and/or shiny in appearance and resemble tar.

Additional symptoms of MC: gut leakage, poor body condition with muscle wasting around the spine, potbelly, staining around the tail and back paws, weight loss with a voracious appetite.

Cecotropes from a non-megacolon rabbit in relation to the size of a pinkie finger.



Cecotropes from a megacolon rabbit in relation to the size of a pinkie finger.





How can you best support your Megacolon (MC) rabbit?

Believe it or not, many veterinarians do not yet acknowledge MC as a condition in rabbits. Therefore, it is important to find a rabbit-savvy veterinarian who believes that megacolon exists in rabbits, or one who is willing to learn from vets who do. Once you have found a trusted veterinarian, work on a diet and in some cases, a medication plan, to keep your rabbit's MC symptoms as mild as possible. Each MC rabbit is different, so a diet and medication plan for one MC bunny may not work for another. Once you find a diet that works, stick to it! Only make modifications as needed. Take your MC rabbit for wellness exams 2x a year and bring along a sample of their fecal output which will help your veterinarian assess how they are doing.

Get to know the subtle signs before a serious GI crisis arises. Often, an MC rabbit's gut will begin to slow down and become backed up but the rabbit will continue to eat voraciously, and your first sign may be a decrease in fecal production. They may also show a decrease in appetite but won't refuse their favorite treats. It can be tough to notice the early stages of an episode, but the better you know your rabbit, the clearer it will be. Talk to your vet about what to do when you notice these early signs so you can hopefully prevent a major crisis from happening.

Signs that may point to a GI Slowdown in an MC rabbit:

- Fewer or no fecals produced
- Decrease in appetite or disinterest in foods they normally enjoy
- Behavioral changes
- Body posturing: belly pressing, hunched look
- Change in fecals from their "normal"
- Distended abdomen that feels hard to the gentle touch

MC-friendly treats:

The Well Kept Rabbit:

Delilah's Megacolon Tonic Forage, Delilah's Megacolon Tablets

www.thewellkeptrabbit.com

Pre & Probiotics:

(May be useful to maintain a balance of bacteria in the gut. Please note it's use and results are anecdotal.)

- Protexin: Pro-fibre for Rabbits, Fibreplex
- Probios: for horses



Probios chewable

Delilah's Megacolon tonic forage

Tips:

- Avoid fresh or dried fruit and other sugary treats.
- Introduce new foods slowly and one at a time so you can observe what helps or worsens symptoms.
- Feel (palpate) your rabbit along its spine regularly and note any changes. If the spine feels thin, contact your rabbit-savvy veterinarian to reassess their diet.
- When it comes to greens, feed herbs such as parsley, dill, mint, oregano, thyme, basil, rosemary, lavender, sage, cilantro. Avoid kale, lettuces, spinach, etc.
 - Introduce greens one at a time each week. Discontinue any that cause soft stool.
 - Some MC rabbits have a “dry gut” and will do better with very wet greens as it will add hydration to the gut. Others have a “wet gut,” and may or may not be able to tolerate greens at all.
- Offer fresh or dried Plantain (a plant also known as “ribwort,” and not the banana). Plantain is a great motility aid for rabbits. You can purchase dried from sources such as Small Pet Select, or Elliot’s Awesome Treats (on Facebook). Fresh is easy to grow from seed in a window sill.
- Make sure they get plenty of exercise time. Exercise promotes better motility.
- Keep them well hydrated:
 - Offer water in a bowl rather than a bottle.
 - If your MC rabbit tolerates fresh greens, serve them wet.
 - For increased hydration when early signs of a GI slowdown are suspected, you can offer a 50/50 mix of water and plain (unflavored) green coconut water in addition to their plain water.
 - You may ask your veterinarian to teach you when and how to administer sub-q fluids at home in the event of a GI crisis.
- It has been reported that the following supplements may be helpful for treating MC:
 - Oxbow Vitamin C tablets may aid in gut motility.
 - Oxbow Digestive Support tablets may be helpful in MC rabbits that have a dry gut.
 - Daily Vetri DMG can be offered for immune system support.

*Dried plantain
(ribwort)*



*Fresh plantain
(ribwort)*

*Oxbow
tablet*

References & further learning:

<http://www.vgr1.com/mc/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bbSrsXeSMNY>

http://www.medirabbit.com/EN/GI_diseases/Differential/mega_differential.htm

<https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0093750>

Dani Tomlin (2017). Megacolon In The Domestic Rabbit. *Bunny Mad! Magazine*

<http://www.pva-apeldoorn.nl/megacolon%20konijnen.pdf>

Genetic Megacolon Bunnies on Facebook: A private, invite-only group for Genetic MC bunny owners only. If you have an MC rabbit, you may email katie@longislandrabbitrescue.org to be introduced to the group admin to be invited.

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We Are Looking for Loving Homes:

These Rabbits Are in Foster Care With Rabbit Rescue & Rehab



Skye.

Skye

Skye is a 3.5-pound Himalayan rabbit and mom to the litter of “colorful” babies (Pink, Green, Blue, Purple and Orange) who all look just like her. Skye was found alone, tragically dumped in Central Park in terrifyingly poor condition, clearly having been horribly mistreated for quite some time even before she was abandoned outside. A passerby thankfully saw Skye outside and, wanting to help this poor bunny, brought her back to his home. Once there, she surprised him with a litter of babies. When we first saw Skye shortly after she had given



Indigo.

birth, every bone in her small, frail body was visible and all movement was taxing for her in her emaciated state. Still, Skye was a wonderful mother to her babies and slowly but surely, she gained weight and became stronger. Today, Skye is completely healthy and enjoying some well-deserved free time now that her babies are grown up and off on their own adventures. Skye is looking for a quiet, calm human companion to match her sweet but reserved energy.

She is a gentle soul who will form a close bond with her family and enjoy receiving affection, provided she is given the opportunity to approach first. Skye has a particular affinity for her Oxbow woven grass toys and is content to stretch out and fall into a deep sleep for afternoon naps. If you are interested in adopting Skye, please email nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com.

Indigo

Indigo's puppy-like playfulness is as endearing as his ears are enormous! Indigo arrived at ACC showing signs of terrible neglect. When we pulled him from the shelter, the veterinary treatment he was receiving had already filled an 8-plus-page-long medical record in that short



Ruby.

time. He was facing an abscess, severe sore hocks, skin conditions, parasites and more. Today, Indigo has settled in beautifully and gained a whole 3 pounds since he first arrived at the shelter (currently tipping the scales at a magnificent 9.5 pounds!). Now living on cushy, appropriate floor material, Indigo's once infected and painful hocks are growing in nice new fur to protect his wonderfully giant feet. Indigo has been neutered and is living in foster care. He hopes to soon meet his forever family who will enjoy playtime and cuddle time as much as he does! If you are interested in adopting Indigo, please email nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com.

Ruby

After being brought in as a stray, this young NZW was cleverly named Rabbit Deniro during her stay at ACC, but this true gem of a bunny deserved a more fitting name. So we introduce you to Ruby, an incredibly beautiful, curious, friendly and affectionate large female rabbit. She is a magnificent companion, always interested in what her foster humans are doing and taking breaks between her binky sessions to sit beside them. Ruby deserves a forever home

(Continued on page 23)

Forever Homes Found!

We are happy to report that Deborah Jane, Zach, Cauliflower, Poppa and Earl Gray were adopted since the last newsletter. Congratulations!

These Rabbits Are Available At Manhattan Animal Care Center (NYC ACC)

(Check Petfinder for Updated Listings;
Some Rabbits Have Found Homes!)



Bourbon.



Admiral Claude Vaughn Johnson.



Lollipop.

(Continued on page 24)

RRR Rabbits in Foster Care

(Continued from page 22)

where she will receive lots of attention, time and space to exercise. Ruby is spayed and living in foster care. To inquire about adopting Ruby, please email nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com.

Blue and Purple

Blue and Purple are a young brother/sister pair of 3.5-pound Himalayan rabbits. Blue is the more outgoing of the two, and enjoys being wherever his people are at all times. He loves having his cheeks rubbed and will happily melt into the floor for long petting sessions. Purple is shyer than her brother, but is never far behind Blue and enjoys occasional head pets from quiet, gentle people whom she trusts to respect her boundaries. Blue and Purple are a wonderful pair who are very affectionate with each other and spend a lot of their down time closely snuggled up together or grooming one another. Blue and Purple are neutered/spayed and living in



Purple and Blue.

foster care. To inquire about adopting Blue and Purple, please email nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com.

Carmela

Carmela is a young medium-sized Rex rabbit. Her beautiful coat is mostly white with tan and black spots. She is a sweet rabbit who loves to have her soft nose petted. She also likes to explore her



Carmela.

house, but her favorite thing is to relax with a nice soft blanket. Carmela is shy and would likely do best in an adult-only home. She would also likely make a good partner for another rabbit. She has been spayed and is in foster care. For more information and/or to arrange a meeting with Carmela, please email nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com.

ADOPTIONS

Rabbits at Manhattan ACC

(Continued from page 23)



Moose.



Maxi.



Cinnamon Bunn.



Jessica.



Eileen.



Jack.



Jade.



Rabbit Pattinson.

**These Rabbits Are Available
At Brooklyn Animal Care Center (NYC ACC)**



Toki.



Cinnabun.



Artemis.



Ares.



Billy.



Sonny Boy.



Marshmallow.



Tricks.



Pablo.

(Continued on page 26)

ADOPTIONS

Rabbits at Brooklyn NYC ACC

(Continued from page 25)



Happy Feet.



Sherlock Holmes.



Vanilla Bean.

New RHDV2 Case

(Continued from page 7)

[HRS resource center](#) to learn more about the virus.

RHDV2 is the first of the rabbit hemorrhagic disease virus strains to affect

both domestic and North American wild rabbit and hare species. RHDV has an extremely high death rate and a very short incubation period. As many as 70% to 100% of rabbits exposed to the virus will die within 48 hours to 10 days after exposure. Rabbits who survive are

carriers and can infect other rabbits for at least 42 days or longer as they continue to shed the virus.

Newly adopted bunny Elettra takes her binkies seriously. She's currently fine-tuning her midair jumps.

Photo: M.C. Basile



Adoptable Rabbits

There are lots of adoptable rabbits available in Manhattan, Brooklyn, Westchester and Long Island.

To adopt a rabbit in **New York City** or **Westchester**, contact nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com. On **Long Island**, contact Nancy Schreiber at nshreibmd@gmail.com or www.longislandrabbitrescue.org.

You can also visit Manhattan Animal Care Center at 326 East 110th St., between First and Second avenues, and the Brooklyn Animal Care Center at 2336 Linden Boulevard.

Rabbits for adoption in Manhattan and Brooklyn can be found by going to: <http://www.nycacc.org/> and doing an adoption search (for ACC inquiries about adoption/bunny dates, email adopt@nycacc.org). Volunteers are there every weekday evening and on Saturday and Sunday afternoons, but it is best to arrange an appointment first.

Bunny speed dates can be arranged by appointment only. Please contact nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com to make arrangements.

Many of our rabbits are living in foster homes and you can meet them as well. You also can arrange to foster a rabbit until he or she finds a permanent home. Contact nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com

For basic information about rabbits as pets, go to rabbitrescueandrehab.org, www.longislandrabbitrescue.org and the House Rabbit Society main site, www.rabbit.org.

If interested in volunteering for Rabbit Rescue & Rehab, please email nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com.

Photo: Jane O'Wyatt



Tillie's "bunstruction" of a willow tent.

Donations

All donations go directly to caring for our foster rabbits and are tax-deductible. Please help us help them by sending contributions to: Rabbit Rescue & Rehab/NYC Metro Rabbit, 333 Mamaroneck Ave., #363, White Plains, NY 10605 or <https://www.rabbitrescueandrehab.org/donate>

To contribute to Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group, please go to www.longislandrabbitrescue.org.

THUMP MAY 2022

Newsletter of RRR/NYC HRS
rabbitrescueandrehab.org

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Rabbit Rescue & Rehab is a not-for-profit, tax-exempt corporation in New York State. Our purpose is to rescue, rehabilitate and find permanent homes for abandoned, abused and neglected rabbits, and to educate the public on rabbit care through publications, phone consultations, home visits and presentations. This newsletter is published by RRR/NYC HRS, which is solely responsible for its content. We retain the right to edit all submissions, which become the property of the NYC Chapter and cannot be returned.

Rabbit-Savvy Veterinarians

Here's our recommended vet list for the New York metropolitan area. Please note that many clinics have multiple veterinarians, and our recommendations are for specific veterinarians in those clinics. If you can't get an appointment with a recommended vet at one clinic, don't assume (no matter what you are told by the clinic) that other vets in the same clinic can help your rabbit. If you have any questions or would like to discuss any of the vets on this list, please contact Mary Cotter at (914) 643-0515. When you make an appointment with any of these vets, please tell them you were referred by us.

Manhattan:

Deborah Levison, DVM
Symphony Veterinary Center
170 West 96th Street,
New York, NY 10025
(212) 866-8000

Katherine Quesenberry, DVM
The Animal Medical Center
510 East 62nd Street,
New York, NY 10065
(212) 838-7053, (212) 329-8622

Alexandra Wilson, DVM
The Center for Avian and
Exotic Medicine
568 Columbus Avenue,
New York, NY 10024
(212) 501-8750

Westchester County:

Gil Stanzione, DVM
Dakota Veterinary Center
381 Dobbs Ferry Road,
White Plains, NY 10607
(914) 421-0020

Laurie Hess, DVM
Veterinary Center for Birds and Exotics
709 Bedford Road,
Bedford Hills, NY 10507
(914) 864-1414

Long Island:

Jennifer Saver, DVM
Erica Campbell, DVM
Catnip & Carrots Veterinary Hospital
2056 Jericho Turnpike
New Hyde Park, NY 11040
(516) 877-7080

Heidi Hoefler, DVM
Island Exotic Vet Care
591 East Jericho Turnpike
Huntington Station, NY 11746
(631) 424-0300

Ellen Leonhardt, DVM
Animal General of East Norwich
6320 Northern Blvd
East Norwich, NY 11732
(516) 624-7500

Maggie Camilleri, DVM
Paumanok Veterinary Hospital
639 Route 112
Patchogue, NY 11772
(631) 475-1312

Jeff Rose, DVM
Jefferson Animal Hospital
606 Patchogue Rd. (Route 112)
Port Jefferson Station, NY 11776
(631) 473-0415

Shachar Malka, DVM
Long Island Bird & Exotics
Veterinary Clinic
333 Great Neck Road
Great Neck, NY 11021
(516) 482-1101

Licensed HRS Educators

NYC/Westchester:

M.C. Basile
Chapter Manager,
NYC House Rabbit Society

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mcotter64@gmail.com,
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Rofoyo.pippin@verizon.net

Alex McIe
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Marcie Frishberg

Gabrielle LaManna
New Fairfield, CT,
gabbysbunnies@yahoo.com,
(203) 746-7548

Cindy Stutts
bygolyoly@yahoo.com,
(646) 319-4766

Monica Shepherd, DVM

Long Island:

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Donna Sheridan
Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group
Volunteer, hpocus217@yahoo.com,
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Jennifer Saver, DVM