



## **Transporting Your Rabbit to the Veterinary Practice**

### **Transporting Your Rabbit...**

Whilst traveling it is important that a rabbit feels safe and secure and noise is kept to a minimum to prevent it from becoming stressed. Rabbits have a very delicate skeleton that accounts for only 8% of their total body weight, so it is very easy for them to become injured if they are not handled and transported correctly. The majority of domestic rabbits are quite easy to handle and do not tend to struggle or kick out unless they become stressed and frightened. Be aware that they are capable of using their teeth and claws to defend themselves so it is best to have them in a quiet environment to minimize upset.

### **Rabbit Handling...**

The best way to handle a rabbit is to firstly pass one arm over its back, drawing it in close to your chest. This arm will then support the whole of the rabbit's body. The head is tucked under the upper arm, ensuring the rabbit's eyes are covered - this will help the rabbit feel safe and ultimately help it to gain confidence with you. The free arm can be folded across the rabbit's back, gently holding the scruff if needed. Make sure the rabbit is held close and fully supported at all times.

## Rabbit Carriers...

An ideal container to use to transport a rabbit would be one which opens on the top so that there is easy access when lifting the rabbit in and out. Carriers like this one pictured here aren't as good as a rabbit could easily injure its legs on the doorway when being lifted out.



Pictured here are two examples of suitable carry cages which could be used. With both of them it is possible to attach a bottle of water which means the rabbit has a constant supply.

To give the rabbit reassurance a good idea is to place a towel over the carrier whilst on the move as this will help it to feel safe. Whatever type of carrier you choose to use it is important that it is a suitable size so that the rabbit has enough room to be able to express normal behaviour and move around freely without restrictions, but it must not be too big so that it could tumble around and become injured whilst inside. The door must have a secure locking system to prevent the rabbit getting out but also stop other animals from getting in when in situations such as the veterinary practice waiting room.

It must be clean and must be of good quality; things such as broken bars or cracked plastic could cause injury or allow escape! Before using the carrier you could line the bottom with newspaper which can soak up any accidents. An ideal bedding to put inside would be either a towel or a handful of hay so that the rabbit can feel as comfortable as possible.

If you have two rabbits which are paired and living together it is a good idea to also keep them together when traveling and avoid splitting them up. Paired rabbits form strong bonds to each other and will get worried if they are separated.