



Safe Haven Rabbit Rescue, Inc.

Safe Haven Scoop

Our Latest Rescues..... By Karen Augustynowicz, President

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Welcome "Sam"



Sam was pulled out of a high kill shelter when his time was getting short.

Such a sweet guy, Sam is a special kind of bun because he really does seem to love to be held! Another enduring fact about Sam is that even if he is snuggled up sleeping in his box, he will come running over if you call his name - probably hoping you will give him a snuggle or two!

About 2 yrs. old, Sam's right eye was injured prior to coming to Safe Haven and while he does not have sight in that eye, you would never know it. He has adjusted well, is excellent with using his litterbox and a very good eater. Sam has been neutered and just waiting for his special someone. How can you resist this little luv-bug!

Welcome "Thomas"



Our latest rescue is an adorable little boy I named "Thomas". Just 2.88 lbs. when rescued, Thomas seems still a baby and is quickly gaining the weight he missed out on not having a proper "growing" diet.

Thomas really loves his cheeks scratched and quickly starts to "tooth purr" his delight. Thomas had been abandoned on a busy road. Luckily, he was picked up by a young family who did the best they could caring for him until placement in a rescue was available.

If you are looking for an adorable small bun, Thomas may be just the one you are looking for!

Foster Homes Needed!

The number of in-take request calls and emails far outnumber Safe Haven's resources. *Foster homes are greatly needed!* Yes, it is a difficult job as every single rabbit one cares for becomes a part of our lives. They come in frightened or injured or both; they are cared for and loved and woven into our hearts. It is never easy to let them go, but placing your foster in a loving home is a rewarding experience and allows another bun a chance to be rescued. If you are an experience rabbit owner thinking about fostering, please [email today](#) to find out what a rewarding experience it can be! *Ex-Pens, hay, pellets, and veterinary care are all provided by Safe Haven, you just need to add the love and fresh greens daily!*



Educational Corner

by Linda Torlay, Safe Haven Educator

Exercise

Physical activity, playtime, work out, calisthenics ... are all synonyms for exercise. No matter what you call it, regular exercise is essential for your rabbit's body and mind.

One of the biggest misconceptions about rabbits, because they are small, usually docile and cute, is that they are content being kept in a cage. As long as you provide food and water, keep up with litter changes, coo at them every now and then, what more do they really need, right? This depiction couldn't be more inaccurate. Sadly rabbits confined to cages are known to live shorter lives either because of medical problems that develop because of that confinement and/or often they sadly lose the will to live.

Rabbits by nature are designed to sprint, twist and turn, leap and race. Without these highly developed abilities, wild rabbits, because they are prey animals, would not be able to survive. And even though your pet rabbit is not under any threat in your home the physical structure of their being is still the same and the desire, the need, to sprint, twist and turn, leap and race is still an important biological need.

Exercise (*along with a healthy diet*) is beneficial for healthy blood flow, stimulation of the gastrointestinal tract, a healthy urinary tract and bladder strength, the development of strong healthy bones and keeping those bones strong and healthy, muscle tone and strength including the heart, weight management, abating behavioral problems, well being and positive mental health.

Ideally exercise should be given daily with the amount varying depending on the health, age and stamina of the rabbit. Young rabbits obviously are more energetic and require more exercise while that of an older rabbit or one with health problems with vary. The average exercise time needed for a young healthy rabbit and rabbits without any health problems ideally is between 2 - 4 hours daily. The best times for exercise is when a rabbit is naturally most active which is early to mid morning and again late afternoon into evening. Exercise can be divided or all at once. Caution and care should be used with older rabbits and rabbits with chronic health problems and seeking the advice of a rabbit savvy Veterinarian regarding what is appropriate for your rabbit's individual needs is imperative.

Rabbits being naturally inquisitive will often willingly explore an area outside their pen (just make sure it is bunny-proofed and that you supervise their time out). If you are unable to provide your bunny a room that is bunny-proofed, exercise pens, the kind that come in panels, can be connected to create a large contained area that your bunny can safely exercise in. Placing items of mental interest in your rabbits exercise area such as a box with cutouts for hiding, cardboard tunnels, and toys and periodically moving those items around so it's not the 'same ole - same ole' also encourages activity. Even sitting with your rabbit in his exercise area is a pleasurable engaging time as he will explore and interact with you.

Rabbits exercise in short spurts blissfully resting in between activities. Forcing exercise, such as by chasing your rabbit to the point of exhaustion, must never be done. Remember, exercise should be a fun, healthy activity and one your rabbit looks forward to for his body and mind.

Primary resources: <http://www.veterinarypartner.com/Content.plx?A=470>
<http://www.bunnyhugga.com/a-to-z/rabbit-behaviour/playtime.html>
 and

Various Internet Sites

Recently adopted "Colt" also recommends climbing through boxes as a good, fun exercise activity!



For setting a shining example of generosity, we would like to send a special "Thank You!" to.....

* **Camilla Lynch** who celebrated her birthday on August 5th in a very special way. Camilla and her family adopted our very lucky "Julia" on March 9. Wanting to help the other foster bunnies, Camilla asked her friends to donate to Safe Haven instead of bringing birthday presents for her.....and raised \$460 !! As Momma to "Julia", Camilla knows what wonderful companions rescued bunnies can be and gave up getting presents to help more bunnies get good homes. What a wonderful thing to do! **Thank you, Camilla!** The bunnies all thank you too!

Camilla's Mom sent these pictures of Camilla & Julia to share.....



Big Smiles All Around!



Looks like Julia got a present too!

Board your bunny with us!

Going away on vacation or just for the weekend?

Board your bunny with us!
You will have peace of mind knowing your baby is being well cared for and he will have lots of fun at Bunny Camp!

Pictures and more info on our website [BunnySitting](#) page!

All monies earned go directly toward the care of our foster rabbits.

Ask the Vet . . .

Question: *When shopping for rabbit food I overheard a woman telling the cashier her rabbit had Bladder Sludge. Can you explain what Bladder Sludge is and what signs would I look for that my rabbit is suffering from it? How would this condition be treated?*

Deborah Adelsohn, DVM at Community Animal Hospital in Morris Plains, NJ replied:

What is Bladder Sludge?

Rabbits, as the unique animals that they are, can suffer from bladder problems that are different than most pet mammals. Unlike most mammals which excrete excess calcium through bile and out of the body through feces, rabbits excrete calcium in their urine. Rabbits are extremely effective at absorbing calcium from the diet and high levels of calcium can accumulate in the bladder. In most other animals this can lead to solid stone formation, but more often, in rabbits excess calcium in the urine can result in the formation of a thick paste. While actual stones can be found in some bunnies, most commonly sludge is a tan, chalky material that is seen as solid as the urine dries out. Rabbits may be predisposed to these problems based on their diet, physical condition and activity level. Sludge is seen especially in older rabbits, overweight rabbits and rabbits on poor diets.

How do you know if your rabbit has a sludge problem? Rabbit urine always contains some calcium and has a cloudy, whitish appearance, especially once dried. If you are noticing a very thick or semi-solid like urine, that may be a sign of problems. Most common signs of bladder sludge include straining to urinate, a wet or dirty rear end (urine scald), increased frequency of urination and change or loss of litter box habits. Urinating may become painful and your rabbit's appetite and activity may decrease. If your rabbit is unable to urinate at all, it may be a sign of a complete blockage, a less commonly seen medical emergency.

How is Bladder Sludge diagnosed? If you suspect your rabbit is having urinary issues, please schedule an appointment with your veterinarian for examination. During an exam, your veterinarian will review your rabbit's diet and behavior. Through palpation and massaging the rabbit's bladder, we can often feel for thickening within the bladder. A urine sample may be helpful in assessing the urine as well as looking for concurrent infection or irritation to the bladder. A urine culture may be used to help check for bacterial infection. Radiographs (x-rays) are one of the most helpful tools in diagnosing sludge. Calcium is radio-opaque and shows up easily on radiographs. Normal bladders appear dark grey to black on an x-ray... sludge-filled bladders may look like a bright white "light bulb." Additionally, blood chemistries and a complete blood count may be performed to help assess overall health, especially of the kidneys.

How is Bladder Sludge treated? A rabbit with severe symptoms of bladder sludge may require hospitalization for fluid therapy to help flush the bladder and manual expression by the veterinarian to help remove the material from the bladder. Often, pain medication and antibiotics are required. Some cases require anesthetizing the bunny, catheterizing the bladder, and flushing the material clear. True bladder stones usually require surgery to remove the stones from the bladder.

(Continued on page 5)

Ask the Vet . . .

(Continued from page 4)

For less severe cases and to help prevent sludge formation, a combination of diet and environmental changes may be recommended:

1. **Water Consumption** - It is important to encourage rabbits with bladder sludge to ingest more water. Water helps to dilute out the urine, making sludge thinner and easier to pass. Providing water in both a crock and sipper bottle may help some rabbits. Flavoring the water with a small amount of fruit juice (such as pineapple, apple or grape juice) may encourage drinking more. Providing wet leafy greens will also increase water intake. If inadequate intake is a persistent problem, your veterinarian may prescribe administration of subcutaneous fluids at home.
2. **Exercise** - I find exercise is one of the most important components to treating bladder sludge. Calcium material is heavy and settles to the “bottom” of the bladder. Running around agitates the material, making it easier for the rabbit to pass. Overweight bunnies benefit doubly - by helping to reduce both weight and bladder sludge. Older rabbits should be evaluated for arthritis and treated if necessary to make exercise more comfortable and enjoyable. Exercise can be encouraged through the use of play areas, foraging (placing food in various areas or hide boxes) and toys.
3. **Litter box** - Keeping the litter box clean and attractive may help encourage more frequent urination and elimination of sludge. Try a variety of litter materials to see which your rabbit prefers. Lowering the side of an older rabbit’s litter box may make it easier for the rabbit to enter. A little hay in the corner of the box may encourage the bunny to use the box.
4. **Diet** - Diet change alone is not usually successful in eliminating bladder sludge. However, limiting excess calcium may be a part of the management plan. Alfalfa and alfalfa pellets are especially high in calcium and should be eliminated from the diet. Timothy based pellets, if fed, should be used in limited amounts. Grass hay, such as timothy or orchard grass, should be the largest portion of a rabbit’s diet and fed free choice. Leafy greens should be fed in large amounts. Leafy greens such as cilantro, romaine, Swiss chard, endive and watercress are all good choices. Very high calcium greens such as dandelion, kale and collards may be avoided or limited depending on the severity of your rabbit’s condition. Altering diet may help both with sludge problems and reducing weight in overweight bunnies.

Bladder Sludge in rabbits can be a long term condition to manage. Working with your veterinarian to address predisposing conditions such as obesity, diet and water consumption can help to control the condition and reduce recurrence.

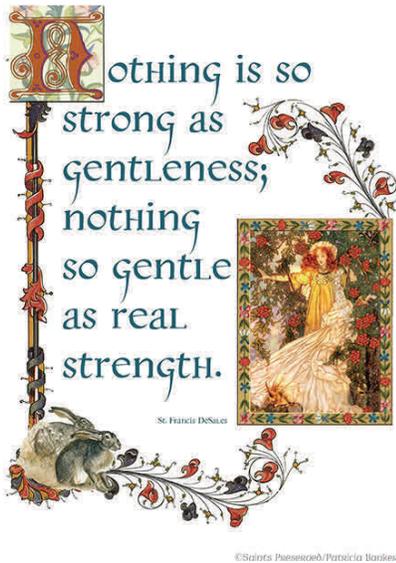
References:

- Brown, Susan. *Bladder Stones and Bladder Sludge in Rabbits*, VeterinaryPartner.com; November 2006.
 Pollack, C. *Calcium Metabolism and Excretion in the Rabbit*, British Small Animal Veterinary Congress; 2007.
 Wilsbach, K. *Lowering Blood Calcium*, House Rabbit Society, Rabbit.org; July 2011.

Did You Know?

By Linda Torlay, Safe Haven Educator

DID YOU KNOW St. Melangell is the Patron Saint of rabbits and hares, small creatures and the natural environment?



In Christian denominations a Patron Saint is regarded as a heavenly advocate or supernatural being who is guardian of a particular something. Commonly declared a Saint by the church, Patron Saints are believed to be able to intercede effectively for the needs of their special charges and are often prayed to for help.

St. Melangell (pronounced "Mel-eng-eth") is also known as St. Monacella (Latin). Her legend notes she was the young daughter of King Jowchel an Irish King who arranged for her to marry in the early 7th century. Not wanting that life she fled to the Tanat Valley of Wales known as Powys vowing herself to God. For the next fifteen years Melangell lived in quiet solitary devotion until one day in AD604 Brochwel Ysgythrog, the prince of Powys, was hunting in the area she took sanctuary in with his hounds and pursued a hare into the forest where Melangell was at prayer. The pursued frightened hare found Melangell and took shelter under her garments. When the prince and his hounds caught up to the hare, the hare was said to have defiantly faced its pursuers from under Melangell's skirt. The hounds being urged on by the prince refused to advance and kept their distance.

Prince Brochwel approached Melangell and when he heard her story he gifted her the land on which they were standing as a "perpetual refuge and place of sanctuary" in recognition of God's protection of the "little wild hare". Upon receiving the land Melangell established a small religious community of women and served as their abbess for the next 37 years.

The Feast Day of St. Melangell is commonly celebrated May 27.

Primary internet resources:

<http://saintspreserved.com/Melangell.html>

http://saintspreserved.com/small_creatures/

<http://www.examiner.com/article/st-melangell-is-the-patron-saint-of-rabbits>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Melangell>

IMPORTANT!: Please be sure we have an active email address for you. Notices for events are sent out first via email and then placed on our website. You will find a "Subscribe to our Newsletter" link on our [home page](#). Subscribing will also send you notifications of our up-coming events! Thank you!

Recent Events



Our most recent event was new for us this year—and is one we look forward to doing again!

Held Sunday, Oct. 6, 2013, hosted by [Chimney Hill Estate Inn](#), Lambertville, NJ, we were delighted with the turn-out and success of the event.

Through presentations, demonstrations and informational tables, we hope both new and experienced bunny parents took away valuable information and enjoyed the event.

If you did attend, we'd love to hear your input about the event. Please fill out this quick [feedback form](#) to let us know your thoughts. *Thank you!*

For complete photos visit [Here](#)

Event logo Designed by Laura Colon—Thank you,



Bike for the Buns!



Each Spring, on the Saturday before Father's Day, we hold our very popular "Bike for the Buns!" event. Designed not only as a fundraiser, but as a fun filled, friend & family-time day in the country. Our event is held at [Bull's Island Recreation Area](#) near Stockton, NJ.

Participants not only enjoy a scenic trail bike ride along the river's towpath, but they also get to relax in a wooded picnic campground after their ride.

This year's event was extra special as it was also a celebration of Safe Haven's 10 Year Anniversary! We hope everyone had a great time; enjoyed the scenery, the food and chatting with fellow bunny friends.



****[Event Photos](#) can be found here!****

A Special Thank You to Jacqui Crown who continues to delight participants with her so cute event T-shirt designs each year!

The bunnies want to remind....**please mark your calendars to reserve the Saturday before Father's Day for next year's event!** Even if you do not ride a bike, we have a non-rider registration just for you! Come for the picnic, walk along the trails, or just relax with your bunny loving friends!

We also had a **Twenty-Mile Club** this year for those riders going the long ride option. Congratulations to:

Dave Gardner, Magdalena Giacone, Bob Coniglio, Robert Robinson, Greg Manderski, Mike Bover, Jim Alexis, Ed Yen-nie, Karen Anderson, Tim Lelie, Daniel Lay, Stu Gillard, Carol Nace, and Stacey Bavos!



Happy Halloween!



Twing Twing & Chiku Chiku Miyazeki



October 31, 2013