What to feed a baby rabbit

BEFORE YOU FEED ANYTHING

1. An empty-looking nest is normal.
2. Put the kits back, cover them and lay a tic-tac-toe of string or grass on top.
3. Furred, eyes open, ears up and softball size (4–5 inches, over 100 g)? It is on its own already.
4. Hurt, cat-caught, cold or covered in flies? Keep it warm and dark in a box, with no food, water or cow's milk.
5. Call a licensed wildlife rehabilitator.

Find a wildlife rehabilitator near you: ahnow.org

✓ Safe staples

- **Fox Valley 32/40 formula** – Rehab formula. Serve at 100–102 °F
- **KMR kitten milk replacer** – Powdered kitten formula, wild or pet kits
- **Timothy or grass hay** – Free choice from the day the eyes open
- **Fresh grass** – Wild kits only, unsprayed, not by roads
- **Dandelion and plantain** – Wild kits, unsprayed leaves and flowers
- **Clover** – Wild kits, young leaves, unsprayed
- **Water** – Shallow dish once mobile, never dripped
- **Alfalfa hay and pellets** – Pet kits free choice; plain pellets only

! Small amounts only

- **Goat milk** – Only mixed with KMR powder, never alone
- **Heavy cream** – Stopgap only: 1 cream, 3 KMR, 3–4 water
- **Esbilac puppy formula** – Pet kits only, never wild cottontails
- **Unflavored electrolyte fluid** – Dehydrated, warm kits; first 2 feeds
- **Cecotropes from a healthy rabbit** – About 1 a day, healthy hay-fed donor
- **Probiotic powder** – Tiny amount daily, first 2 weeks
- **Romaine, leaf lettuce and kale** – Wild kits from eyes open; pets from 12 weeks
- **Carrot tops, parsley and cilantro** – Leafy tops only; herbs soften stools
- **Celery** – Pets from 12 weeks, 1-inch pieces

✗ Never feed

- **Cow's milk** – Causes fatal gut problems
- **Pet-store baby formulas** – First Born can kill within 24 hours
- **Carrots** – Sugary root, adult pet treat only
- **Banana** – Fruit sugar, adult pet treat only
- **Apple and applesauce** – Sugar for babies; seeds carry cyanide
- **Grapes and berries** – No fruit before about 4 months
- **Iceberg lettuce** – Causes diarrhea; use romaine
- **Bread, crackers and cereal** – Starch linked to fatal enterotoxemia
- **Nuts, seeds and grains** – Fatty or starchy; no seed or corn mixes
- **Cheese and dairy** – Herbivores can't digest dairy
- **Chocolate** – Toxic; caffeine is unsafe too
- **Avocado** – Breathing trouble and heart failure
- **Onion and garlic** – Can cause fatal anemia

Feeding schedule

Age	Looks like	Food	Amount	How often
0–1 week	Pink to thinly furred, eyes and ears closed, about 26–40 g	Fox Valley 32/40 or KMR; rehabbers give electrolytes for the first 2 feeds	Start with drops, building to about 10% of body weight per feed (3 ml at 30 g)	3 feeds a day, 6–8 hours apart
1–2 weeks	Furred from about day 5, eyes open at 7–10 days, ears up at 9–12 days	Formula; wild kits get hay, weeds and greens from eyes open	About 10% of body weight per feed, 6 ml at most	2 feeds a day, 3 if thin
2–3 weeks	Fully furred, nibbles at 12–15 days, starts leaving the nest	Formula, hay and greens free choice, a shallow water dish	About 10% of body weight per feed; greens always in the box	1–2 feeds a day; cut to 1 only while weight rises daily
3–4 weeks	Softball size, 4–5 inches, about 100 g or more, ears up, jumpy	Grass, weeds, greens and hay; wild kits stop formula	Hay and greens free choice	Eats on its own
4–12 weeks	Wild: released by a rehabber after 5 weeks at 140 g or more. Pet kits: weaned near 6 weeks	Pet kits: alfalfa hay, alfalfa pellets, water; no vegetables or fruit	Hay and pellets free choice	Eats on its own
12 weeks and up	Pet rabbit with a near-adult look	Hay and pellets; first vegetables, one kind at a time	One new vegetable under 1/2 oz, then wait 24 hours	Daily; fruit only as a rare treat from about 4 months

Feeding log (weigh before feeding, same time each day)

Date	Time	Weight (g)	Amount (ml)	Peed/pooped	Notes