



## CRITICAL CARE FOR RABBITS



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Critical Care(TM) is a superior pet food which can be given voluntarily or by syringe feeding to herbivores which are unable to eat their normal diet due to illness or surgery. The special composition of this high-fibre timothy hay based product ensures an improved physiological gut environment and aids proper digestion.



### How do I prepare critical care?

Mix one part of the powder with 2 parts of warm water. Please ensure Critical Care is fed at room temperature or warmer.

Critical Care should ideally be prepared fresh for each feed. If necessary, the powder when premixed with water can be refrigerated up to 24 hours.

If the consistency of the prepared feed is too thick, you can add water at any time until you have the desired consistency.

### Mixing critical care

Critical care is mixed with water to the consistency of thin porridge, yogurt or a thick gravy. The consistency should be more towards liquidly than stiff and guggy. Mix some warm water first and then dilute with cold water. If it is too thin, we will lose the fibre content, if it is too thick the bunny will have trouble swallowing it. **HINT:** If the bunny will not take the critical care then mix a thin slice of mashed banana into the mix. Give the critical care in small doses during the feeding time.

### For severely underweight buns

You can add some weight gain pellets and a slice of banana to the critical care mixture. Grind up the weight gain pellets in a coffee grinder to make a powder consistency. Mix with the critical care. We use "high gain true gain" weight gain horse pellets. You can also offer this mixture in balls or in a bowl to assist weight gain.



### How much should I feed and when?

The required amount of Critical Care (CC) for each animal depends on several factors, such as animal type, age, weight, and clinical condition. The daily amount for any animal may be adjusted based on veterinary recommendation. Weak, dehydrated animals may also require additional fluids to be administered by a veterinarian if they are not eating. Your bunny should eat 50mls of CC per kg of their body weight per day (over a 24hour period). How many feeds needed will depend on how much your bunny will take and their overall health condition.

## How do I Syringe Feed?

Use a long nozzle syringe. Often when syringe feeding, it is not the food that deters the animal from eating, but the procedure of restraint. So, it's very important that the caregiver remains calm and relaxed. Slow and deliberate movements with frequent breaks will decrease the stress for both the animal and the caregiver.

## FEEDING CHART

This chart is made up for supplementary feeding only. For overnight feeding the bun should be in hospital.

Body Weight	Amount Per Day	No. of feeds per day with feeding amounts		
		6x (4 hourly)	8x (3 hourly)	12x (2 hourly)
0.5 kg	25 ml	4ml	3ml	
1.0 kg	50 ml	8ml	6ml	
1.5 kg	75 ml	12ml	9ml	
2.0 kg	100 ml	15ml	12ml	
2.5 kg	125 ml	20ml	15ml	10ml
3.0 kg	150 ml	25ml	18ml	12ml
3.5 kg	175 ml	n/a	20ml	15ml
4.0 kg	200 ml	n/a	25ml	16ml
4.5 kg	250 ml	n/a	30ml	20ml
<b>Giant Breeds 5.0 – 7.0 kg</b>	Please speak to your vet regarding critical care quantities and how often to support feed the bunny. For giant breeds, do not exceed feeding more than 30 mls of critical care at one feed without consulting your vet, as smaller amounts are preferred.			

## Tips if feeding alone

Take a deep breath and relax

Place the bunny on a towel on a table with their bottom facing you, so that if they back up your body acts as a barrier

Stroke or massage the animal gently

Give a syringe of water to the animal prior to feeding

Lean over the bunny, insert the feeding syringe beside the front teeth

Feed in small amounts giving them time to swallow

Continue to pat between feeds



## Tips if you have help

Burrito wrap your bunny and bring the towel back to expose their head

Make sure they are secure but not wrapped too tight

One person holds the bunny

The other feeds small amounts giving time to swallow

Pat between feeds

## Important

Prior to feeding critical care, please have your rabbit checked by a bunny savvy vet to ensure there are no blockages or bloat developing. Critical care feeding is just part of treatment, which also includes fluids and pain relief and may include other medications to treat the underlying cause.

