

Sexing Rabbits And Separating Baby Rabbits From Their Mother

At what age can baby rabbits leave their mother and how are rabbits sexed?

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Q: My neighbor's rabbit recently had five babies. I would like to adopt two of them. I was caring for them while she was away for the weekend, and I noticed the rabbits are now fully weaned. Can they be separated from the doe at this time? Also, I would like two females. How do I sex them?

A: Baby rabbits need to stay with their mother until they are about 8 weeks old. Baby rabbits start nibbling on hay and pellets at about 2 weeks old. However, just because they start eating on their own does not mean they can be taken away from their mother. They need to continue to feed from their mother until they are about 8 weeks old. Baby rabbits separated from their mother before this time often end up dying.

Sexing Rabbits

It is best to have a rabbit-knowledgeable vet or someone at a rabbit rescue group show you how to sex rabbits. An unneutered male rabbit has two pale pink testicles between his back legs. Don't just look for testicles though, because a neutered male won't have any. If you gently push above the genital area, a penis will come out on a male rabbit. Female rabbits have a protrusion too, so sometimes people mistake a female for a male because of this. The female rabbit has a slit in the end of the protrusion, where a male has a round hole at the end.

You don't want to make a mistake sexing rabbits though, so have someone that knows how to sex rabbits help you.

Even if you get two female or two male rabbits, they still need to be spayed or neutered. A male-female pair needs to be spayed or neutered too. Spaying and neutering helps control the overpopulation of rabbits, and also prevents uterine cancer in females. In both male and female rabbits, spaying and neutering helps with litter box training and curbs bad habits. Finally, rabbits need to be spayed or neutered so they will not fight, even if they are the same sex.