



Syringe Feeding your Rabbit or Guinea Pig

Syringe Feeding (or force feeding) your rabbit or guinea pig can be a very important part of a medical treatment plan to help them to recover from surgery or illness. It is important to be gentle and persistent with your pet as providing an adequate intake of food can be the turning point of recovery.

Mixing the Oxbow Critical Care

-It is important to make up the critical care as required as it solidifies with time.

-Using a small container mix one part powder with two parts water – the powder absorbs a lot of water so more water can be added as needed.

-Mix well – you want the mixture to look like thick soup or porridge. Not overly watery but not too thick that you can't draw it up into a syringe.

- Put the syringe into the mixture and pull the plunger all the way out to the end. With the syringe tip staying in the mixture wriggle the syringe around, this should allow the suction from the pulled back plunger to pull the mixture into the syringe. If this is not working you can completely remove the plunger from the syringe and pour the mixture into the syringe from the bottom. Replacing the plunger once the syringe is full. Another option to make it easier is to cut the tapered end of the syringe off to make pulling up the food mixture easier.



Feeding your rabbit or guinea pig

Step 1: Find a comfortable position to feed your rabbit or guinea pig. This may be on the floor or on a table or bench. Make sure you have everything ready before you begin, this may involve a second person to assist if needed.

Step 2: Hold your pet securely (this may require a 'Bunny wrap' or a 'guinea pig burrito' - see below) and place the tip of the syringe in the corner of their mouth behind the front teeth. Depress the plunger and give small amounts at a time (up to 1 ml) and allow your pet to chew and swallow. Continue to give small amounts pausing between each few mls. Often the syringe will block up a little, if this occurs direct the syringe into the towel and use more force to depress the plunger, this often removes the blockage and you can resume feeding your pet.

If your pet is stubborn they may not swallow and food may start to dribble out of their mouth, if this occurs then wriggling the syringe tip around in your pet's mouth will often encourage them to start a chewing motion. If you are still having trouble or your rabbit or guinea pig is too unwell to cope with the syringe feeding then they may require more intensive care in hospital, please





contact us if this is the case.

If your rabbit or guinea pig is resisting the medicated food, try placing a small amount of unsweetened fruit juice in with the mixture (as a last resort). This generally makes the mixture more palatable for a lot of

As your pet improves and is able to tolerate thicker food you can place small amounts of the critical care in a shallow bowl or wait till it is thicker and roll it into small balls. Some rabbits and guinea pigs love the taste of the critical care mixture and will eat it from a bowl to start with.

How to wrap or 'burrito' your rabbit or guinea pig

If your pet is wriggling or resisting the food then placing them in a towel and performing a 'wrap' or 'burrito' can help to secure them. To wrap your pet, open a towel out on a table. Place them on top of the towel with their head at the edge of the long section in the middle. Fold the towel securely from shoulder to bottom on both sides (long sides of towel) making sure both front legs are enclosed. Then fold the remaining section up to cover their bottom. Your rabbit or guinea pig can now be held relatively firmly from behind with your elbows at their bottom and hands holding their shoulders (and front of towel), lean over your pet to provide more security. A second person can now feed your pet.



Always remain as calm as possible and hold your pet securely and firmly but not tightly. If you are only able to administer a small amount of food, stop feeding and try again in 10 to 15 minutes. Critical care can be stored in a sealed container in the fridge for 24 hours.

If you have any trouble or would like any further information please don't hesitate to get in touch with us.

