

# Christmas can be a dangerous time for pets, and Rabbits are no exception to this.

**General stress:** any change to the normal routine should be minimised as much as possible. This is especially the case for indoor rabbits, with new people in the house. It's useful to ensure visitors, especially children, are supervised or shown how to interact with your rabbits. With outdoor rabbits, ensuring that visiting people and animals don't cause them stress, and keeping to the normal routine is important.

**Specific hazards:** from extra electrical wiring to tinsel, Christmas is a perilous time. Ideally, keep your rabbits safely well away from any dangers in a quiet familiar place. If this is not possible, be especially careful to prevent access to electrical wires and cables such as tree lights, mobile phone chargers etc, and decorations that may be equally tempting to chew on.

## **Christmas plants and trees:**

It's generally best not to permit access to unusual plants, as rabbits can be inquisitive and destructive and move plant pots around, potentially breaking them, or injuring themselves, as well as eating the leaves etc. Having said that, the toxicity of pine resins and poinsettias has been overstated in the past (<https://rabbit.org/health/poinsettia.html>) and the main concern is gastrointestinal upset from eating these new foods.

**Diet:** trying to keep their diets consistent is the most important thing. Ensuring that you have ample stocks of their normal foods, particularly fresh vegetation, and avoiding any unusual additions or treats just because of the season. Your rabbits are unlikely to appreciate seasonal "treats", and they could cause serious gastrointestinal upset.

**Fireworks:** Fireworks may be let off around the New Year, especially, and can be scary, especially for outdoor rabbits. Either bring them inside (but see below), or take steps to reduce stress by adding extra sound insulation to their outdoor quarters (foam, fabric or polystyrene type products around the outside, and/or masses of hay and straw inside). Aromatic stress reduction vaporisers and playing moderate volume white noise may also help.

**Weather:** insulation and regular changing of water bottles and bowls may be needed to stop them freezing. Extra insulation, and providing heating via microwaveable discs, may be needed. Avoid bringing rabbits indoors in all but the most extreme cold, and if you do, keep them in the coldest indoor room possible, to avoid dramatic changes of temperature.



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A hutch is not enough