

Does your bunny get overly excited with food? Have you ever heard yourself say to your bunny, “slow down, you are going to choke” or “you need to chew”? I used to say that all the time to Suzie, until one day, she really did choke. Thankfully our story has a happy ending,

I am not a veterinarian, just a bunny mom learning something new every day. Suzie choked on her pellets one morning. When I posted her story on Facebook, so many bunny parents commented with similar stories, some bunnies survived, and sadly, some did not. I urge you to check with your veterinarian and go to the www.vgr1.com/choking to read about the bunny Heimlich and other life-saving techniques BEFORE your bunny chokes. When choking happens, you don't have time to go to a website and read, every second counts.

Suzie's Choking Experience



Suzie has the same breakfast every morning. She starts with a few pellets in a bowl, while I get her salad ready. One particular September morning started out like any other day, but quickly took a turn that I won't soon forget.

Suzie had started on her pellets while I went to get her salad. I can see and hear her from our kitchen. I started hearing what sounded like a sneeze. Then I noticed that she was next to her water bowl, so I thought she must have stuck her nose in the water. Then I heard it again and noticed she kept lifting her nose in the air and shaking her head. I rushed over to find drool

on her mouth and heard a gurgling sound. I picked her up and it was obvious she was choking. Her eyes started to roll back in her head, her mouth was open, and she went limp. I remembered reading about the bunny Heimlich months before, but didn't remember everything. Thankfully I remembered enough because it worked. Technically it is called the Centrifugal Swing.

I put Suzie on my forearm, belly down with legs hanging over both sides of my arm, used my other arm and hand to secure her head and body, raised her up and swung her towards the floor multiple times until she started breathing.

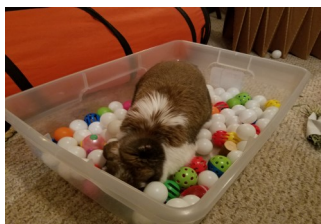
Performing this technique can be very dangerous in itself, so again, I urge you to go to www.vgr1.com/choking to watch the video and read more about the different techniques and to talk with your vet BEFORE you need to use the technique. Because when choking happens, you don't have time to get to your vet,

you must do something immediately.

After your bunny has experienced a choking incident, it is extremely important that you take your bunny to the vet. The fluid created during the incident can get in their lungs and cause pneumonia. In Suzie's case, it went into her sinus's, so she was prescribed an antibiotic.

It was the scariest moment for all of us. Suzie's dad was there, too, and equally shaken.

We started looking for ways to slow down her eating. We now sprinkle food in her ball pit, shown below, and in her litter box of hay. We also came up with a couple of recipes using broken down pellets. She seems happy with her new diet.



If your bunny has back or leg issues, this may not be a proper alternative. Please use good judgment.

Suzie's Recipes

Suzie's Pellet Crumble

- Add 1/8 cup pellets to a small bowl (we use Oxbox)
- Add just enough water to touch each pellet
- Pour out any extra standing water (you don't want mush)
- Watch pellets expand and fall apart

Serving suggestions:

- Serve in a bowl a la carte
- Mix in fresh herbs
- Use as a salad topper

I like to make a couple servings at a time. If you don't add too much water, the crumbs will remain dry.

Suzie's "Meatballs"

- *I use one part Critical Care (as a binding agent) to one part Pellet Crumble
- Add a few drops of water at a time, you don't want it soupy, just wet enough to bind together.
- Use teaspoon or small cookie scooper to scoop onto plate.

Optional Ingredients:

- Add a chopped piece of fruit to mixture or put on top off "meatball."
- Crush a freeze-dried banana chip into the mixture before rolling into balls.

Store in fridge

*I start with 1/8 c or 1/4 c each and go from there. It depends on the amount of "meatballs" you want on hand.



Strawberry "Meatballs"