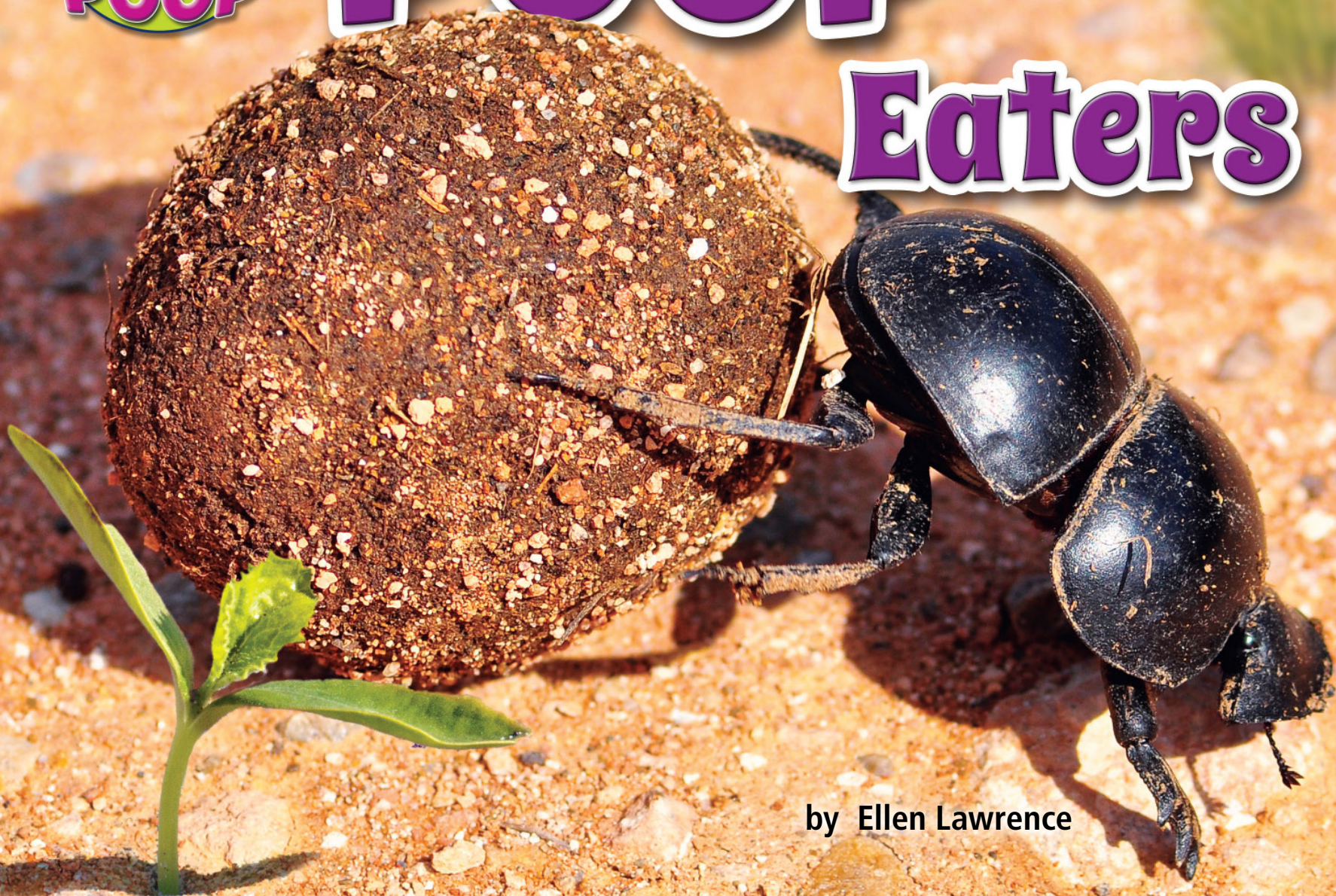




POOP

Eaters



by Ellen Lawrence

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POOP Eaters

by Ellen Lawrence

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What's for Dinner?

A rabbit is nibbling on grass and wildflowers.

Then the furry little animal tucks its head between its legs.

It gobbles up soft, moist balls of poop coming out of its own backside!

Gross—or is it?

As strange as it seems, rabbits need to eat their own poop to stay healthy.





a rabbit eating its own poop

guinea pig



It's not just rabbits that eat their own waste. Guinea pigs, chinchillas, hamsters, and many other animals are poop eaters, too!



How exactly do you think a rabbit benefits from eating its own poop?

Time to Eat—Twice!

A rabbit gets the **nutrients** it needs from food—and from its own poop!

After it eats, the rabbit's meal enters a part of its **digestive system** called the cecum.

Here, the food becomes a special, nutritious poop called cecotropes.

The rabbit poops out the squishy, greenish-brown cecotropes and eats them.

Then the cecotropes pass back through the rabbit's digestive system.

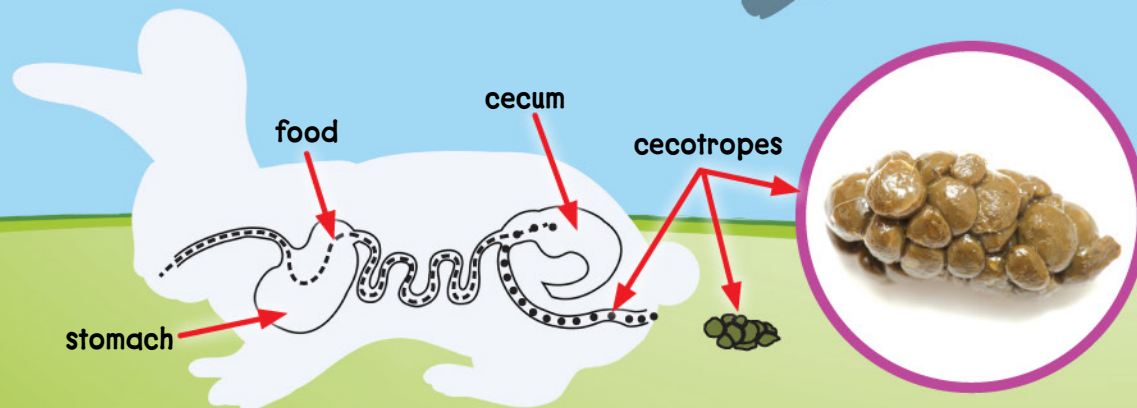
After the cecotropes pass back through the rabbit's digestive system, they are pooped out as dry, brown fecal pellets.



Rabbit Digestion



1 A rabbit eats food.

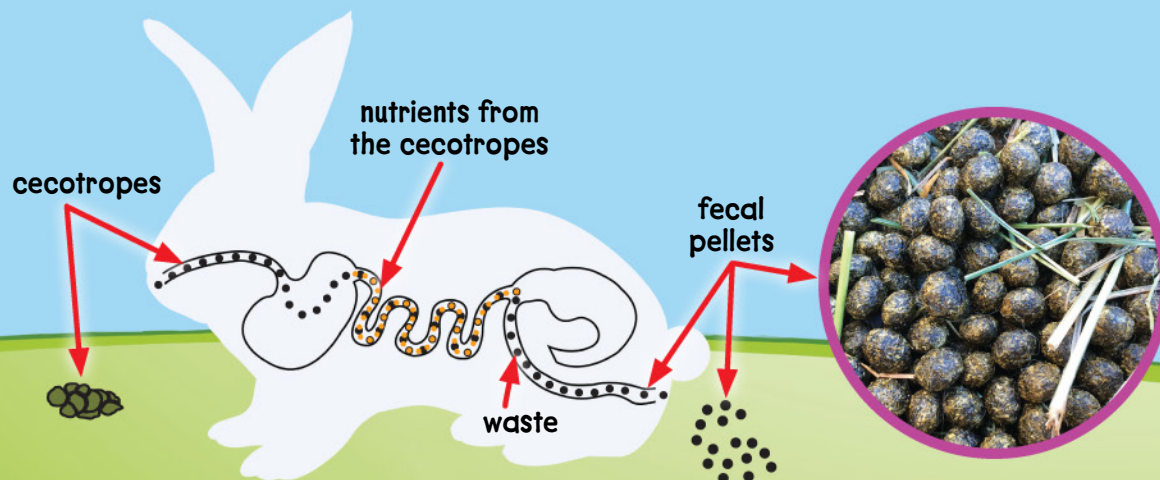


2 The food is turned into cecotropes inside the rabbit's body.

3 The rabbit poops out the cecotropes.



4 The rabbit eats its cecotropes.



5 The rabbit's body takes nutrients from the cecotropes.

6 The rabbit poops out fecal pellets.