



Rabbit Haemorrhagic Disease

RHD is a disease spread via direct contact between rabbits and through contaminated surfaces such as bedding, hutches and clothing. This means that both indoor & outdoor rabbits are at risk. Unfortunately death usually occurs 12-36 hours after the first signs of illness.

Symptoms include:

High temperature (fever)

Collapse/Paralysis

Convulsion

Breathing difficulties

Loss of appetite/Lethargy

Bleeding nose

There is no cure and RHD is almost always fatal, most rabbits die within days. Vaccination is very successful.

At The Vale we used a combined myxomatosis and RHD vaccine which can be given from 5 weeks of age. Boosters are given annually along with a full health check.

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Caring for your Rabbit



Where your animal's health is our top priority.

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Rabbits make great pets, they enjoy being stroked, groomed and being made a fuss of and will form a great bond with their owners.

Feeding:

Unfortunately, bad diet is all too often linked with health problems.

In general we recommend that the majority of your rabbit's diet is made up of hay & grass. Small amounts of vegetables can be offered as a treat.

We also recommend a complete pelleted dry food such as Burgess Supa Excel. Each pellet contains a balance of vitamins, minerals, fibre and calcium. 'Muesli' type mixes can lead to selective feeding, and overall an unbalanced diet, usually high in starch and low in fibre & calcium.



Diet related health problems commonly seen in rabbits include;

Over grown teeth—sometimes meaning the rabbit finds it hard to eat.



Obesity—This has many consequences, such as poor grooming, matted fur and a dirty bottom leading to **fly strike**.

Urine sludge and bladder stones—leading to urine scald.

One way of helping your rabbit live a long and healthy life is to ensure that they are vaccinated against the common rabbit diseases. Kittens receive immunity from their mother from the colostrum ('first milk'), however this will only last for a few weeks, after this time it is important you help provide that protection.

Your rabbit should be protected annually against the diseases which are most common, highly contagious or cause severe illness/death. These are Myxomatosis and Rabbit Haemorrhagic Disease.

Vaccinations contain small quantities of altered or killed viruses, bacteria or disease causing organisms. When these are administered to your rabbit they stimulate the rabbits immune system to produce disease fighting cells and antibodies to protect against disease.



Your rabbit will require annual boosters all their life. These boosters are to maintain antibody levels and continued protection against disease.

Myxomatosis

Myxomatosis is a potentially lethal disease affecting rabbits. It is common among the wild rabbit population in the UK. Over 90% of the wild rabbits contracting myxomatosis die from the disease. Recovery is more likely in pet rabbits if given intensive veterinary treatment.

It is spread by direct contact (discharge from eyes, nose, lesions), or via fleas, ticks and mites. This means that rabbits who don't come into contact with other rabbits will still need to be vaccinated.

Symptoms include

Swelling of the head, ears and genitals (swelling can mean rabbit is unable to eat, drink and breathe)

Eye & nasal discharge

Death can occur within days