



Rabbit Advice

Fly Strike

This condition can occur when flies lay their eggs on the skin of the rabbit which subsequently hatch into maggots and eat away at the flesh of the species. This is a potentially fatal condition if left untreated.

The warmer weather can increase the risk of this occurring, as well as rabbits with specific conditions such as arthritis, gut/urinary issues, dental disease or other wounds can become more susceptible. The recommend protocols to adhere to as standard practice, recommended by the Rabbit Welfare Organisation are:

- check your rabbits bottom twice daily during the summer months and atleast once daily in the cooler seasons
- Your rabbits environment should be kept clean at all times so it does not attract flies
- Any yellow fly eggs present on your rabbit should be removed as soon as possible
- Your rabbit should be of good health and an ideal weight to ensure they are able to clean themselves properly and perform usual daily activities

As part of our Healthy Pet Scheme, a rabbit membership includes periodic treatment for the prevention of fly strike.

If there are any concerns that your rabbit may be suffering from this condition, please contact the surgery as a matter of urgency so that we can investigate and provide immediate treatment.

Vaccinations

Rabbits can be vaccinated, using a combined vaccine, against myxomatosis and rabbit haemorrhagic disease (myxo-RHD) from 5 weeks of age. This requires yearly boosters to maintain immunity.

This is recommended for all pet rabbits, including those kept indoors.

Myxomatosis is a severe, largely fatal, viral disease which affects skin, eyes, lungs, liver and genitals of both wild and domesticated rabbits. It can be transmitted from infected rabbits via insects or fleas, as well as direct infection being possible through respiratory tract secretions if wild rabbits are able to get near enough to domesticated rabbits. Contact between the two are best prevented.

RHD is another mostly fatal disease, transmitted directly between rabbits or indirectly via clothing, bedding or rabbit food.

In some cases, caught early, treatment such as fluid therapies, antibiotics, anti-inflammatory and syringe feeding can be used to help combat the virus. Sadly, in more severe cases euthanasia may be the kindest option.

Worming

Specific rabbit wormers are recommended to be given orally 2-4 times a year