Nibbles Rodent & Rabbit Rescue
www.nibbles.org.uk
Reg Charity No. 1068657

Our Guide to



Veterinary Care

When is veterinary care important?



As a prey species, rabbits hide illness and injury very well, so they don't appear vulnerable to predators. As guardians, this can make it very difficult for us to spot the subtle signs that our rabbits have become unwell and need veterinary care. If you have any concerns over your rabbit's health it is vital to seek prompt advice from an experienced and qualified vet. Do not rely upon advice from the internet or various advice groups online. Nothing can replace or substitute an examination by a trained vet, who can provide your rabbit with the correct diagnosis and treatment. We highly recommend pet insurance to protect against unexpected and expensive veterinary treatment.



There are a number of common health problems rabbits face and our brief guide will help you understand when it is vital to get an appointment booked with your vet.

Common Illness in Rabbits

E.cunciuli - also known as EC is a parasite which infects the brain, nervous system, kidneys and other internal organs of rabbits and a small number of other species. It can lead to a range of different symptoms from head tilts, wobbliness, lameness, blindness, and excess drinking. Many rabbits carry EC and remain symptom free, however, others become unwell and need treatment. The parasite is spread via urine and faeces of an infected rabbit. Your vet will be able to test for EC via a titre test which will measure the levels of the antibodies in the blood. These tests are not always conclusive but do give a good indication. It is important not to treat for EC unless under the advisement of a vet who has seen the rabbit and ruled out other illnesses. Treatment isn't always successful, but can help prevent symptoms becoming worse.





Pasteurella - a respiratory infection also known as 'snuffles' is a bacterial infection which needs urgent and prompt treatment. Symptoms include frequent sneezing, discharge from the nose and weeping eyes. Pasteurella is highly infectious and is rarely fully cured by antibiotics. 'Snuffles' rabbits should not be mixed with unaffected rabbits and need to be paired with another rabbit known to have a clinical history of pasteurella. If you suspect your rabbit is infected seek immediate advice from your vet to begin a treatment plan. It is wise to take a sample of the nasal discharge to find the most appropriate antibiotics.



Fly Strike - this is a serious condition and is classed as an emergency requiring urgent veterinary attention. This horrible condition occurs when flies lay their eggs in a rabbit's fur, quickly hatching into maggots, they will begin to eat into your rabbit's flesh. If you have found maggots in your rabbit's fur, call your vet immediately and do NOT try to wash them out with water.



Skin Parasites - rabbits can be affected by a number of skin parasites from fleas to fur mites and even ear mites. We do not recommend routine treatment for any parasites, however, if you suspect your rabbits have skin parasites consult your vet for suitable and safe treatement.



Stasis

Rabbits need to be continuously moving food through their digestive systems, when movement slows down or stops altogether this is known as stasis. Stasis is a very serious and life-threatening condition which needs urgent veterinary treatment for the best chance of a full recovery.

The first indication of stasis is a lack of interest in food and a change in the size and quantity of droppings. It is vital that you do not wait to see if your rabbit picks up, catching and treating stasis early provides the best chances of a full recovery.



Myxomatosis & RVHD

The only way to protect against myxomatosis and RVHD is via annual vaccination. The most common vaccine now available in the UK is **Nobivac-myxo RHD Plus** and protects against Myxi and RVHD 1&2.

Dental Health



Rabbits' teeth grow continuously throughout their lives and should be checked annually by a vet, in some cases more often. Rabbits can have problems with misaligned incisors and painful spurs on molars.

Other Important Things



Worming - It is not recommended to routinely worm rabbits, as this can lead to beneficial gut organisms being destroyed and leads to a natural resistance in parasites.

Flystrike Protection - Aside from good husbandry and a suitable diet, the risk of flystrike can be further reduced by Rear Guard which is applied directly to the rabbit in late spring / early summer.





Choosing your vet - Rabbits are classed as exotics within the veterinary industry and therefore owners need to carefully select a suitable vet able to treat them. We recommend using The Rabbit Awareness & Welfare Association & Fund's UK Vet List