



# TREMAIN VETERINARY GROUP

## INFORMATION LEAFLET

### RABBIT

#### Veterinary care

#### VACCINATION:

Rabbits should be routinely vaccinated against myxomatosis and viral haemorrhage disease (VHD). Both of these viral diseases can be fatal in unvaccinated rabbits and once infected there is no cure.

#### **Myxomatosis**

This is spread mainly by fleas or other biting insects. This is how it is spread from wild rabbits to pet rabbits. Within a short time affected rabbits become blind because of the swelling around the eyes and for this reason feeding and drinking is often difficult. The vaccination can be given from six weeks of age and boosters are given every 6-12 months depending on the disease risk in your area. Flea control is also of benefit.

#### **Viral Haemorrhagic Disease**

This is also fatal disease for rabbits, spread by both direct and indirect contact. This disease attacks the liver causing severe bleeding which can kill the rabbit quickly. Vaccinations for VHD can be done from 10 weeks and boosters are annually. The vaccination has to be done two weeks apart from the myxomatosis vaccination.

#### DENTAL CARE:

Dental problems are one of the commonest ailments in the domestic rabbit. Rabbits teeth continuously grow throughout their lives. Grass and hay is highly abrasive therefore causing natural wearing down of the teeth. If there isn't enough fibre in the diet or the teeth are not aligned properly they will become overgrown. This will cause lacerations on the side of the mouth and they will not be able to eat properly.

Signs of dental disease are as follows;

- ❖ Loss of weight
- ❖ Dropping bits of food
- ❖ Preference for soft food
- ❖ Dribbling
- ❖ Not eating

Treatment:

Overgrown incisors will need regular trimming. The molars and premolars are more difficult to see and would need a General Anaesthetic and rasping.



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### **NEUTERING:**

Neutering rabbits is strongly recommended unless you plan to breed from them. It is recommended that young rabbits be separated into single sex groups at 16 weeks of age. Speying a female rabbit dramatically reduces her chance of developing uterine cancer later in life. Castrating a male rabbit reduces the likelihood of him developing behavioural problems.

### **FLEAS AND MITES:**

Flea bites can cause irritation and discomfort for rabbits. The flea may also be an implication in the transmission of myxomatosis. There are flea treatments available, please ask at reception.

Ear mites are small parasites that live in the ear canals, They cause head shaking, ear scratching and blood around the ear canal. The cheyletiella mite known as walking dandruff can infect rabbits and these mites can cause mild rashes in humans.

### **GROOMING AND NAILS:**

Rabbits moult twice a year but pet rabbits moult more often. Ensure you groom frequently at time of moulting to prevent ingestion of fur. Rabbits enjoy being groomed (wild rabbits groom each other as a social activity) therefore groom once a week.

Check the nails weekly as they can become long and curly in the domestic rabbit. One of the nurses will happily show you how to clip the nails.

### **TRACER CHIP:**

A tracer microchip is the best way to ensure that your rabbit is safely returned to you if it gets lost. Once the chip is inserted it will last a lifetime. Please ask one of the nurses for further details.

### **INSURANCE:**

Insurance is now available for rabbits. If your rabbit is sick, insurance means that the vet can dedicate their efforts into doing all that is necessary to diagnose and treat your pet without having to worry about the cost