



TREMAIN VETERINARY GROUP

Treating your pet like one of the family

Advice Note 13.0

Rabbit Veterinary Information

What should I vaccinate my rabbit against and why?

Rabbits should be routinely vaccinated against myxomatosis and viral haemorrhagic 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 five weeks of age and boosters are given every 12 months. 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 five weeks and boosters are annual.

The vaccination given provides protection against both myxomatosis and VHD.

What do I need to know about my rabbit's teeth?

Dental problems are one of the commonest ailments in the domestic rabbit. Rabbit's 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

How are dental problems treated?

Overgrown incisors will need regular trimming. The molars and premolars are more difficult to see and would require a general anaesthetic and rasping.

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Should I get my rabbit neutered?

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. Spaying 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.