

Myxomatosis

We have recently seen an increase in the number of pet rabbits suffering from the often fatal disease of myxomatosis. We are hoping that by publicising the disease we can help prevent a lot of vulnerable rabbits dying from this illness.



Is your rabbit at risk?

What signs do you need to look out for?

Can it be treated?

Can it be prevented?

Myxomatosis is a viral disease which is spread by biting insects most commonly the rabbit flea. The virus is rife in the wild rabbit population so any rabbit with access to outdoors, including indoor rabbits that have a run outdoors are considered at risk.

The typical signs you will notice are:

- Swelling of the eyelids and discharge from the eyes
- Swelling of the mouth and nostrils and discharge from the nose
- Swelling of the genitals
- General lethargy and dullness

In general it is diagnosed on clinical examination as the clinical signs are so characteristic for this condition.

As this is a virus there is no direct cure for the condition. The survival rate for infected rabbits is very poor. The body needs to get rid of the virus itself so our job is to make sure the rabbit is as fit and well as possible to do this. That may involve antibiotics/anti-inflammatories /pain relief/fluids/assisted feeding or just TLC.

This disease can be prevented and you can protect your rabbit against this often fatal condition. It involves regular vaccination and trying to prevent the rabbit fleas. As our area has recently had a lot of cases it is considered high risk and thus vaccination is recommended every 6 months.

For any more information on the disease please do not hesitate to give your local Scarsdale practice a call.

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Scarsdale Vets
Pride Veterinary Centre
Riverside Road
Derby DE24 8HX
Telephone: 01332 678333
www.scarsdalevets.com

