

MYXOMATOSIS

WHAT IS IT?

A virus which is endemic among wild rabbits and can be contracted by domestic rabbits.

HOW CAN I STOP MY RABBIT GETTING MYXOMATOSIS?

Rabbits who spend any time in the garden are most at risk, although even indoor rabbits can contract the virus through being bitten by mosquitoes and fleas. Keeping your rabbit protected from fleas (especially when you have other pets) with a product like Advantage and keeping the hutch and run screened from other rabbits and insects will help prevent your rabbit from contracting the virus. But the only way to make sure your rabbit is protected is through a yearly vaccination. If you live in a high risk area or there is an outbreak of the virus locally, it is advisable to have the vaccination every 6 months. Please contact your vet for advice.

HOW DOES A RABBIT GET MYXOMATOSIS?

The disease is caused by direct contact with an infected rabbit or carried by mosquitoes and fleas that have bitten infected rabbits. Infected rabbit fleas can be transported in hay sold commercially.

WHAT HAPPENS IF MY RABBIT CATCHES MYXOMATOSIS?

The beginnings of the virus may cause lethargy, red, swollen and watering eyes. These then progress to include swelling around the face. Unfortunately there is no specific treatment for the condition and most rabbits that contract the virus will die.

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