

FLYSTRIKE IN RABBITS

What is Flystrike?

Flystrike occurs when flies lay their eggs on your rabbit, most commonly around its REAR END. The eggs then hatch into maggots which eat away at the surrounding flesh. This painful and potentially life-threatening condition can occur in only a matter of hours. Therefore, IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT YOU CHECK YOUR RABBIT TWICE DAILY, especially between the months of April and October. You are looking for any excessive dirt around its rear end or little cream/white packages which can look like sawdust when clumped together (the fly eggs). If you are worried, you should ring your vet immediately.

Is my rabbit at risk?

ALL pet rabbits are potentially at risk and should be monitored closely since the whole process can occur in just 12-24 hours.

There are certain factors that can increase the risk of your rabbit developing flystrike and should be avoided if possible including:

- Obesity
- Arthritis/Older rabbits
- Long haired rabbits
- Dental problems
- Rabbits prone to diarrhoea
- Rabbits with open wounds or abscesses.

How can I prevent Flystrike?

PREVENTION IS KEY in the management of Flystrike, given the quick onset of the problem. Here are a few things you can do to optimise the chance of keeping your rabbit healthy:

- Check your rabbit (especially around its rear end) at least twice daily during the danger months (April-October).
- Clean out the hutch regularly, especially the toilet area. This should be cleaned every day ideally, particularly if you have more than one rabbit, to minimise the risk of attracting flies.
- Place fly strips around the outside of the cage/hutch.
- Feed a good quality, high-fibre diet such as hay/grass. This prevents weight gain and keeps faeces solid.
- Apply "Rearguard" to your rabbit's rear end, tail and hind limbs every 10 weeks. This prevents eggs from hatching into maggots.

And finally.....

If you are worried or you would like more advice, please do not hesitate to contact us at the clinic, on (01223) 249331 or visit us on our website www.cambridgevetgroup.co.uk. We are always happy to answer any questions you might have or to give your rabbit a check up.

