



RABBIT HAEMORRHAGIC DISEASE

(also known as RCD – Rabbit Calicivirus Disease)

This disease is a highly infectious viral disease in rabbits which more often than not results in death. RHD is transmitted either by direct contact between rabbits or through contact with surfaces (grass or hutches) which has been contaminated by the virus (urine, faeces or respiratory secretions). There is thought that it may also be carried short distances in the wind and be transported by other animals such as flies and birds.

The RHD virus appears to be quite stable in the environment with most outbreaks occurring during the winter and spring.

The incubation period for RHD virus is between 1-3 days with death generally occurring 1-2 days post infection. The disease tends to affect adult rabbits rather than the kittens.

RHD causes blood clots to occur in the major organs resulting in respiratory and cardiovascular failure. Rabbits generally don't show much in the way of clinical signs and it is common for owners to find rabbits dead in their hutches with no prior knowledge of them being ill. Clinical signs may include fever, anorexia, hyperactivity, ocular haemorrhages, paddling of the feet and sudden death.

Due to the rapid onset of disease and high mortality rate prevention is better than cure. Good pet management practices include **VACCINATING YOUR RABBITS**, ensuring your pet rabbits are kept well away from wild rabbits, isolating any sick rabbits quickly and regular cleaning of hutches to reduce the attraction of flies etc to the hutch.

Rabbits should be vaccinated at 10-12 weeks of age. Rabbits less than 12 weeks of age will require a booster vaccination 3-4 weeks after the initial vaccination. Vetco Ltd recommends all rabbits have an annual booster vaccination.



** ANIMAL FACTS **

- Horses & Cows sleep while standing up
- Elephants are the largest land-living mammal in the world
- Many whales are toothless. They use a plate of comb-like fibre called baleen to filter small crustaceans and other creatures from the water
- Even when a snake has its eyes closed, it can still see through its eyelids
- Sharks lay the biggest eggs in the world
- Although a giraffe's neck is 1.5-1.8 metres, it contains the same number of vertebrae as a human neck
- The average life span for a dog is around 10-14 years
- A leopard's tail is just about as long as its entire body. This helps it with balance and enables it to make sharp turns quickly
- An adult gorilla is about 1 metre tall to their shoulders when walking on all fours using their arms and their legs

Case of the month - Developmental Disease

'Bob' is an 8 month old huntaway dog who presented lame in the right forelimb. Bob's owners had noticed him lame on and off for about a month and had just noticed that his leg had become slightly bowed. Bob had x-rays taken of both front legs which revealed very bowed radial bones in both legs. The growth plates in dogs bones start to close between 8-10 months depending on the size of the dog. At this stage Bob has both forelimbs splinted in an attempt to straighten his radial bones while his growth plates are still open. If this is unsuccessful Bob will need to be sent to an orthopaedic specialist to have his legs straightened.



Developmental orthopaedic disease most commonly occurs in fast growing, large/giant breed dogs. The main risk factors include genetics, ad lib feeding, feeding of high energy foods and excessive intake of calcium from food, treats or other supplementation. It is important the correct nutrients are provided in the appropriate amounts and ratios for optimal bone development. The easiest way to ensure that this is happening is to feed a good quality puppy food – these generally come in regular puppy and large breed puppy. The main difference in these two foods is the level of calcium and the energy density. If puppies are being fed a good quality puppy food they shouldn't require additional supplementation of vitamins or minerals.

We recommend feeding puppy food for at least 12-18 months and then introducing a good quality adult maintenance diet. Excessive exercise, particularly on hard surfaces, may also be detrimental to healthy bone development in young animals.

NEW VETERINARIAN JOINS THE TEAM

Some of you may have already had the pleasure of meeting our most recent addition to the Kennington team – Dannielle Dunn.

Dani is originally from Invercargill, and has recently returned after vetting in sunny Cromwell to greener Southern pastures. Dani and her husband reside with 2 cats and a Labrador.

Dani is keen on playing touch rugby and doing a bit of rock climbing, snow boarding and surfing. Dani is interested in all aspects of veterinary medicine and she is looking forward to getting to know more Vetco clients and patients.



KENNINGTON CLINIC

11 CLAPHAM RD 03 230 4689

EDENDALE CLINIC

14 SWEENEY ST 03 206 6170

Desexing Your Pet

If you are not intending to breed from your pet it is recommended that you have it desexed. This is a permanent operation.

Advantages;

- Removes the sexual urges (less humping your leg!)
- Prevents a female from coming into heat and breeding (No unwanted kittens or puppies.)
- Reduces spraying and territorial marking in male cats.
- Reduces wandering in male and female dogs.

Age - We recommend that cats and dogs be desexed between 6 – 12 months of age although the operation can be carried out at any time after 6 months. You may discuss this with one of our veterinarians if you have any questions.

Positive Note: Less stray cats and kittens and unwanted puppies.

Generally this is a day surgery, so the animal will be dropped off in the morning and go home that evening. Please don't ask too much of your animal in the next few days though, as it is quite an invasive and potentially painful operation. For this reason, all of our patients receive ample pain relief. Your pet will need to return in two weeks to have its sutures removed and incisions checked.