



RABBITS & RHDV

- WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW -

Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Virus (RHDV) is a highly contagious and deadly disease caused by a calicivirus that affects both wild and domestic rabbits. It's not contagious to people or other animals. For the first time, the virus is causing deaths in wild rabbits and hares native to North America and is spreading rapidly. Visit rabbit.org/rhdv to see an outbreak map.

The virus is shed in urine, feces, and secretions from eyes, nose, and mouth, and remains present in fur and internal organs and tissues. Rabbits are infected by oral, nasal, or ocular exposure to the virus or by blood-feeding insects. **Even if your rabbit is kept inside, they are still at risk of becoming infected with RHDV.** While RHDV only affects rabbits, the disease can be transmitted to them by people or animals through contact with contaminated objects, animals, insects, or feces.

The virus causes death within 3-5 days of exposure, often with no symptoms. A sudden rabbit death is suspicious and should be reported to your veterinarian as a possible RHDV case. Report sightings of sick and/or dead wild rabbits to your state wildlife officials; **do not touch them.**

PROTECTING YOUR RABBIT FROM RHDV

- ▶ Keep your rabbit indoors with no outdoor playtime and no playtime with other rabbits from outside your home.
- ▶ Wash your hands thoroughly before and after handling rabbits.
- ▶ After contact with other rabbits, change your clothes and wash them twice.
- ▶ Leave shoes outside your home.
- ▶ Disinfect objects that may be contaminated. Visit rabbit.org/rhdv for a list of RHDV-effective disinfectants. Not all disinfectants work against the virus.
- ▶ Keep mosquitos and flies out of your home with window and door screens.
- ▶ Know your hay, feed, and greens sources, and avoid if located in outbreak areas. Consider feeding greenhouse or indoor-grown greens.
- ▶ Do not feed foraged plants, grasses, or tree branches.
- ▶ Quarantine any new rabbit for at least 14 days.
- ▶ Multi-pet households should take additional precautions to protect their rabbit, as the virus can be spread to a healthy, indoor-only rabbit by cats and dogs. **(see reverse)**
- ▶ Learn how to trim your rabbit's nails and groom them at home, not taking them to higher-risk locations like a rescue or vet's office.
- ▶ Use a monthly flea treatment for rabbits, cats, and dogs. Advantage II and Revolution are safe to use on rabbits. Never use Frontline. Visit rabbit.org/faq-grooming to learn more.
- ▶ If you live in an outbreak state, contact your veterinarian to ask about vaccination. **(see reverse)**



GETTING YOUR RABBIT **VACCINATED**

An annual vaccine is required for continued protection against RHDV. Vaccination is expected to be effective for most rabbits—it may not prevent the disease in 100% of cases, but if vaccinated, it helps rabbits survive if they have been exposed to RHDV. Biosecurity measures should still be taken to protect vaccinated rabbits.

Currently, a vaccine is not widely available in North America. In states with a current outbreak, special permission is being given by state and federal agencies to veterinarians to import European vaccines. Contact your veterinarian to inquire about getting your rabbit vaccinated if where you live is affected. Visit rabbit.org/vet-listings for our state-by-state list of rabbit-savvy vets.

MULTI-PET HOUSEHOLDS

Those who live in a multi-pet household will need to take additional biosecurity measures to help keep their rabbit from getting RHDV.

We recommend using a monthly flea treatment for rabbits, cats, and dogs, especially in outbreak states and if any pets in the home go outside. Advantage II and Revolution are safe to use on rabbits. Never use Frontline. Do not feed dogs or cats raw or freeze-dried rabbit meat—if there is a virus in the meat, it could be spread to pet or wild rabbits by the animal's feces. Keep cats indoors, so they can't bring in the virus from outside. Keep dogs on-leash outside so they don't directly interact with wild rabbits, alive or deceased. Consider having your dog wear booties outside, or washing their paws when going back inside your home. Designate separate areas in your home for your dog and block dog access to areas where your rabbit lives or exercises.

LEARN MORE ABOUT RHDV

As the North American RHDV outbreak develops, House Rabbit Society will continue to keep you updated at rabbit.org/rhdv with information about the spread of RHDV and how you can protect your rabbit. Subscribe to our newsletter at rabbit.org/signup to ensure you receive timely alerts about RHDV.

