

Flystrike

As the warmer weather approaches the risk of flystrike in rabbits increases.

Flystrike is caused by blowflies/bluebottles which become attracted to any soiled skin (usually around the hindquarters), and lay their eggs, which in hot humid conditions can develop into maggots in less than 24 hours. These maggots eat under the skin and release poisons, which are fatal to the rabbit. Often the first sign is that the rabbit becomes quiet and depressed, on closer examination the back end of the rabbit will be damp and odorous, and maggots will be seen.

Preventing Flystrike

Flystrike is a condition where prevention is definitely better than cure. Check your rabbit over thoroughly morning and evening (even house rabbits), paying special attention the hindquarters. Special attention should be given to rabbits that are debilitated, longhaired, overweight, have wounds or are prone to dirty bottoms. Dirty bottoms should be cleaned straight away.

Use Rearguard or Xenex, which are insect growth regulators that prevent fly larvae from developing to the point where they are able to penetrate tissue and feed on the rabbit, so any eggs that are laid will simply fall off dead before they can cause harm. Regular bottom checks should still be carried out when using Rearguard or Xenex.

Ensure that cages and runs are kept clean, remove droppings and urine daily and clean out the whole cage at least once per week.

If maggots are seen, or any behaviour is noticed that may indicate flystrike bring your rabbit to the surgery immediately, do not wait as maggots spread very quickly.

If you would like further advice on preventing flystrike or would like to purchase Rearguard or Xenex please contact us.

If you would like to make an appointment or require further information please contact us at Brayton 01757 705562 or Sherburn-in-Elmet 01977 684952.