



Rabbits Vaccinations and their Viruses

Introduction

Rabbits were introduced to Australia in the 18th century and have since adapted very well to the Australian environment. They have also been widely adopted and domesticated into many households as intelligent, inquisitive, and gentle pets. This has led to the research and development of vaccinations for rabbits against some of the highly fatal viruses that are present here.

Rabbit Viruses in Australia

Australia is host to a variety of rabbit viruses, the most common being the myxoma and calici viruses. Myxomatosis was introduced by the Australian government for control of the wild rabbit population. It causes inflammation and fluid to build up around the eyes, ear bases and genitals of affected rabbits. In almost all cases, infection with the myxoma virus (myxomatosis) is fatal to domesticated rabbits and there is no current vaccination for myxomatosis in Australia.

Unlike myxomatosis virus, there is a vaccine available for calicivirus. There are several caliciviruses that have been confirmed in Australia, with three of these viruses known to cause disease in rabbits:

RHDV-1: this virus was the first released to control the wild rabbit population. It causes a bleeding disorder in rabbits and is highly fatal.

RHDV-1 K5: this virus was also released into Australia for control of the wild rabbit population in 2017. It causes abdominal pain and sudden death in affected rabbits.

RHDV-2: This virus causes acute liver failure and death in affected rabbits.

All of the rabbit viruses discussed here can be spread by direct contact with other rabbits as well as by insects such as mosquitoes.

Vaccinations

Rabbits need to be fully vaccinated - if they have not been vaccinated before, they will need 2 vaccines 4 weeks apart, and previously vaccinated rabbits will require boosters every 6 months.

Our vaccinations include a full health and dental check-up and can be performed on any day we are open. If you would like to make an appointment please just give us a call or check out our website for more information.

