



## CHRONIC GUT STASIS

Some rabbits experience intermittent or chronic gut stasis. It is often difficult to manage these rabbits as there can be a number of different factors at play.

*Causes* of gut stasis should be thought of like building blocks. For example, if there was just one underlying problem (medical or otherwise) a rabbit might be able to cope with that fine, however if there is a second problem (environment/emotional/dietary) then they might not cope and stop eating.

If there is no obvious cause of gut stasis then further investigation is recommended:

*Medical Problem* - A thorough examination is required to ensure that there is no obvious cause of the gut stasis. Often the first step of investigating a cause is a blood test, proceeding on towards radiographs (x-rays) if needed. If this does not show an obvious condition then an ultrasound of the abdomen or other further testing maybe required.

*Emotional State of the Owner* - Many rabbits will pick up on the stress and angst of their human owners, even if that stress is due to the rabbit being sick, and will themselves get upset and stop eating. Sometimes at this point it is good to step back and arrange boarding or staying in hospital for a few days to stop the cycle of stress.

*Dietary Problems* - We all know hay and greens are the best diet for rabbits. Excessive (or any) pellets/mixes/carrots/fruit/lucerne hay, can all cause tummy upsets. Some rabbits are more sensitive than others. Some individual rabbits often have reactions to individual foods. To investigate this we generally need to restrict the diet to hay and one type of green for 1-2 weeks and monitor any signs of stasis. If this does not cause any reaction another green is added and so forth. Diet diaries are always a good idea in repeat gut stasis rabbits.

*Moulting* - Any temperature changes (even turning on the heater or air conditioner) can cause your rabbit to start moulting. This can often come out in large amounts, and ingesting this can cause irritation to the gut and cause them to stop eating in some cases. If this occurs every time your rabbit stops eating then at the first signs of a moult start brushing.

If you are worried about your rabbit, or would like any further information, please don't hesitate to get in touch with us.

