



UVEITIS – EYE INFLAMMATION

Uveitis is a term used to describe inflammation within the eye, it is most commonly caused by damage (ie. A nasty scratch) or in rabbits the *Encephalitozoon cuniculi* (EC) parasite.

What will you see?

- Your rabbit may act differently i.e. behavioural changes, increased lethargy and/or recurrent or ongoing gastrointestinal stasis if they are uncomfortable
- A red inflamed eye, sometimes held closed.
- A white dot in the eye
- Increased blood vessels visible in the eye

How does EC cause an eye injury?

One mode of transmission of the EC parasite between adult and young happens in utero. The parasite can end up in the developing lens (which is one of the important eye structures that helps focus vision). At some point in the development of the parasite it migrates through the lens. The eye is generally damaged in two ways at this time:

1. The parasite getting into the cells within the lens then multiplying and rupturing these cells
2. The secondary immune reaction to the lens protein within in the eye.

Investigation options:

- In rabbits we often recommend testing for the EC parasite. This is a blood test that is sent to an external lab.
- Referral to a veterinary ophthalmologist (a vet who specializes in eye problems). In the early stages lens removal may prevent further disease developing and help to maintain a viable eye.

Treatment Options

In the early stages medical treatment (topical eye drops, oral medications) may prevent further damage and help to control the pain in the eye. Depending on the severity medical treatment may not 'save' the eye and in some cases removal of the eye is recommended. Most of the pets we see generally cope very well with one eye removed and often feel much better when the source of their pain is removed.

If you have any further questions or are at all concerned about your pet please don't hesitate to contact us.

