

## Update on rabbit vaccination

The rabbit infections Myxomatosis and Viral Haemorrhagic Disease (VHD1) are found throughout the United Kingdom and are frequently fatal in unvaccinated rabbits. Both indoor and outdoor rabbits are at risk. At Acorn House Veterinary Surgery we recommend annual vaccination for all pet rabbits. The vaccine that we use covers Myxomatosis and VHD1 in a single injection.



In Europe, an additional strain of VHD exists – VHD2. There have been occasional reports of this strain in the UK over the last 2 years, but in recent months it has become more prevalent. This has led to the cancellation of various rabbit shows and events in an attempt to reduce the risk of disease spread. At present, there is no VHD2 vaccine licensed for use in the UK. There is a suitable vaccine available in France.

Acorn House Veterinary Surgery has arranged to import a small quantity of the French vaccine for use in our clients' rabbits. The vaccine is expected to arrive at the surgery in the next couple of weeks. If you would like to order the vaccine for your rabbit please contact the surgery as soon as possible so that we can add your name to our reservation list.

Please note that the new French vaccine does not protect against myxomatosis. Therefore all of our rabbits must still receive the usual myxomatosis/VHD1 vaccine every year. As myxomatosis and VHD1 are by far the most prevalent of the infectious diseases affecting rabbits in this country, the standard vaccine remains the most important.

If your rabbit has already had the standard vaccination, a gap of at least 2 weeks must be left before administering the new vaccination. The new vaccine should be given annually in low risk areas, and every 6 months in high risk areas or high risk rabbits (those that travel to rabbit shows or for breeding). At present, Bedford is classed as a low risk area for VHD2 but we do see many cases of myxomatosis.

Further information can be found at [www.rabbitawareness.co.uk](http://www.rabbitawareness.co.uk) or by contacting Acorn House Veterinary Surgery on 01234 261839.