

Rabbit Vaccines During the Covid-19 Crisis

Overview

- Rabbit vaccinations protect from deadly diseases such as [Myxomatosis](#) and [Rabbit viral Haemorrhagic Disease \(RVHD\)](#)
- Due to Covid-19 restrictions and social distancing guidelines, some veterinary practices (including PDSA) aren't able to offer vaccinations at present.
- While this unfortunately may put some rabbits at a higher risk once their vaccine protection runs out, it's necessary to ensure the sickest pets can get the care they need.
- It's important to have your rabbits vaccinated if possible, and to take steps to protect them if their cover runs out.

Why isn't my vet offering vaccinations at the moment?

During the pandemic, vets are having to prioritise the sickest pets, which means that many routine services such as vaccines are being delayed or cancelled.



During this challenging time, The British Veterinary Association (BVA) and Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) have asked vets across the UK to prioritise urgent/essential treatment for the sickest pets. Sadly, this means that some practices are unable to

offer their routine procedures such as vaccinations and [neutering](#). If your vet is unable to vaccinate your rabbit, you may need contact a different vet, and in the meanwhile, follow our guidance below to keep them safe.

Continue checking your vet's website for service updates, but please keep in mind that they will be extremely busy adapting to the ever-changing challenges of the pandemic. They will be doing their best to care for some very sick pets and will really appreciate your patience and understanding.

I am a PDSA client and I want to have my rabbits vaccinated, what do I do?

We at PDSA, are currently facing a huge demand for our services, and at present, our priority is treating pets in need of urgent or lifesaving treatment. Unfortunately, this means that **we are not currently able to offer preventive services such as vaccinations and neutering**. Although we hope to provide these services at some point, it's likely that a reduced service will continue into the foreseeable future. For this reason, we recommend that our clients find another veterinary practice for their pet's vaccinations and neutering. Try your local private practice, or use the [RCVS website to find vets in your local area](#). Don't worry, even if your rabbits are vaccinated/neutered elsewhere, you will still be registered with us should they become unwell at any point. We really appreciate your patience and support during this difficult time.

[Click here for PDSA service updates.](#)

Keeping unvaccinated rabbits safe

Yearly vaccinations protect our pet rabbits from deadly diseases such as [Myxomatosis](#) and [RVHD](#). Until your rabbits are fully vaccinated, you will need to keep them safe and protected. Myxomatosis and VHD both spread via infected wild rabbits and insects (such as flies and mosquitos), so until they are fully vaccinated, you will need to consider:

- Moving them indoors - you may decide to move your rabbits indoors to keep them protected. However, you will need to make sure they have enough space for them to exercise, hide away, and perform their normal behaviours (such as digging and jumping). Rabbits need an absolute minimum living area of 10ft x 6ft x 3ft high (3m x 2m x 1m) whether they live inside or outdoors.
- Mosquito netting - use mosquito netting to protect your rabbits from insects (over windows if you keep them indoors, and over their entire living space if they live outdoors).
- Cleanliness - you will need to keep your rabbits and their living space clean to avoid attracting insects. Check your rabbits daily and clean any muck off their bottom with lukewarm water. Clean their living space daily, using water or a rabbit-safe disinfectant such as 'Virkon S' or 'Anigene HLD4V'.
- Wild rabbits - make sure wild rabbits can't get to your rabbits or their living space, ideally your rabbits should be separated from the outside world with two barriers (i.e. double fences).

FAQ's

How should I entertain my rabbits if they can't go outdoors?

There are many ways you can [keep your rabbits entertained](#).

- Stuff vegetables and hay into [empty toilet rolls](#) and pack them with paper at either side; poke small holes into the toilet roll for your rabbits to pull the food through - you might have to show them how to do this!
- You could also try building a small obstacle course for your rabbit and guide them around with a treat.

Whilst we are all spending more time at home, it's understandable that family members, especially children, will want to play more with their pets. However, this could cause your rabbits stress if they aren't used to the attention.

- Supervise all interactions and make sure your kids are gentle and quiet around your rabbits.

- Monitor for early signs of stress such as hunching down, thumping or hiding away - a stressed rabbit is more likely to scratch or bite.
- Most rabbits don't like being picked up. Instead, try stroking them gently when they are relaxed on the ground. If you want a cuddle, sit on the floor and encourage them onto your lap using treats.

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