

# Rabbit Vaccines During the Pandemic

## Overview

- Rabbit vaccinations protect from deadly diseases such as [Myxomatosis](#) and [Rabbit viral Haemorrhagic Disease \(RVHD\)](#)
- During the pandemic, some veterinary practices (including PDSA) have had to delay preventative services (such as vaccinations) in order to prioritise sick and injured pets.
- However, it's still just as important to keep your rabbit protected against preventable diseases, so if your vet isn't able to vaccinate them you may need to contact other practices in your area to see if they can help.
- If your rabbit is currently unvaccinated, it's important to know how to keep them safe until they're protected again.

## General information

**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, microchipping, and [neutering](#). If your vet is unable to vaccinate your rabbit, you may want to contact some other local vets to see if they are able to help, and in the meanwhile, follow our guidance below to keep them safe. Please keep in mind that your vets will be doing their best to care for some very sick pets and will really appreciate your patience and understanding during this challenging time.

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

**Sadly, PDSA are not currently able to offer preventive services such as vaccinations and neutering.** This is because, at the moment, we are facing a huge demand for our services, and our priority is treating pets in need of urgent or lifesaving treatment. We hope to start providing preventive services again at some point, but it's likely that a reduced service will continue into the foreseeable future. We recommend that our clients find another veterinary practice for their pet's vaccinations - try your local private practice, or use the [RCVS website to find vets in your local area](#).

Don't worry, even if your rabbit is vaccinated/neutered elsewhere, they will stay 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](#), pack them with paper at either side and poke small holes into the toilet roll for your rabbits to pull the food through - you may have to show them how to do this!
- Build a small obstacle course and guide them around it 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 be stressful for your rabbits 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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