

Limping in Rabbits

Overview

- Rabbits instinctively hide pain to protect themselves (because they are prey animals), so if you notice your rabbit limping, you should contact your vet straight away because it could be something serious.
- There are many different things that can cause a rabbit to limp ranging from a wound, to a broken leg.
- If your rabbit is in pain, it's possible that they may stop eating, which can lead to serious problems such as gut stasis - it's especially important to contact your vet quickly if your rabbit stops eating.

Causes

There are many things that can cause a rabbit to limp:

Broken leg - rabbits have very fragile bones that can break easily.

Arthritis - most common in older rabbits, but can sometimes affects younger rabbits, especially giant breeds. Arthritis is painful, but there are many different things that can be done to reduce the pain it causes.

Wounds and injuries - wounds, sprains, strains and bruising all cause pain and are likely to make a rabbit limp.

Spinal injuries - can cause a limp, but often much more serious problems such as paralysis. Spinal injuries are particularly common if a rabbit is dropped, or jumps from a height.

Bumble foot - bumble foot (also known as pododermatitis) is an extremely painful infection that causes painful, swollen, crusty foot-pads. It's often started by a wound or hard/wire flooring.

Dislocations - (when a bone slips out of place) are extremely painful injuries that often prevent the leg being used completely.

Obesity - if your rabbit is overweight, they are likely to develop painful joints due to the extra weight put through them. Read more about how to keep your rabbit in shape.

Lumps - your rabbit is likely to develop a limp if they have a lump that is big enough to prevent them moving around properly, or that grows in a painful place.

What else to look out for

If your rabbit is limping it will help your vet if you can tell them about anything else you've noticed, such as:

- Any obvious injuries or swellings
- Loss of balance
- [A reduced appetite](#) (a serious symptom in a rabbit)
- Being quiet/hiding away
- Hesitancy to jump
- Any accidents that could have happened

When to contact your vet

Contact your vet immediately if you notice your rabbit limping or not moving normally. It is especially important to see a vet quickly if they have also stopped eating.

You know your rabbit best. If you are concerned it's always best to contact your vet.

Cost

Treatment for a poorly rabbit can become very expensive, especially if they require surgery or specialist treatment. It's important to speak openly to your vet about your finances, the cost of treatment, as well as what you think is right for your bunny. There is often several treatment options so if one doesn't work for you then your vet may be able to offer another.

Consider insuring your rabbit as soon as you get them, before any signs of illness start. This will ensure you have all the support you need to care for them.

[Find out more about PDSA's veterinary services](#)

Published: Jan 2021