

# Limping (rabbit)

## Overview

If your rabbit is limping it is usually a sign of something serious. Rabbits naturally try to hide pain and health issues for as long as possible, for this reason it's important to take them straight to the vet if you notice a problem.

There are many reasons a rabbit might limp, most are due to pain. Rabbits who are in pain may stop eating, which can lead to serious gut problems.

**Take your rabbit straight to the vet if you notice them limping.**

## What else to look out for

It can be difficult to tell if your rabbit is in pain because they are so good at hiding it! Other signs to look out for include:

- Eating less or nothing at all
- Being quieter or hiding more than usual
- Holding a leg up
- Falling over
- Not jumping as much
- Swellings

## Possible causes

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

### **Broken bones**

Rabbits have very fragile bones that can break easily.

Broken bones will cause limping and reluctance to move. Rabbits will often also eat less if they are in pain.

### **Arthritis**

Arthritis is inflammation of the joints and is very common in older rabbits. It can however also affect younger rabbits, especially giant breeds. Arthritis is painful but there are lots of things you and your vet can do to keep your rabbit as happy and pain free as possible.

### **Wounds and injuries**

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

### **Spinal injuries**

Spinal injuries can paralyse a rabbits back legs, these are particularly common if a rabbit is dropped or jumps from a height.

### **Bumble foot**

Bumble foot (also known as pododermatitis) is an infection that causes a painful, swollen, crusty areas on the bottom of the feet. Sometimes it is caused by a wound, but it can also be caused by wire flooring or hard flooring in their enclosure. Bumble foot infections are extremely painful.

### **Dislocated joints**

If a bone comes out of its socket (such as a hip bone) it will be extremely painful and will often mean the rabbit is totally unable to use that leg.

### **Obesity**

If your rabbit is overweight, they may move around less as well as having extra stress put on their joints. This can make them stiff and painful. Read more about how to keep your rabbit in shape.

## Tumours

Some tumours can grow large enough to prevent legs moving normally, or they can grow in painful places and cause a limp. Bone tumours are especially painful and cause many of the symptoms above.

## 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.**

Published: October 2018