



# PENGUIN VETERINARY CENTRE

7 Crescent Street Penguin 7316

ABN 15989957221

[penguinvet@gmail.com](mailto:penguinvet@gmail.com)

Ph [03] 64 371331

[www. penguin.vet](http://www.penguin.vet)

[www. penguinvet.com.au](http://www.penguinvet.com.au)

[facebook.com/PenguinVets.](https://facebook.com/PenguinVets)

## information on **Rabbit Calicivirus Vaccination**



In 2017 the Tas government released ... *RHDV-1-K5* ... a variant of the original strain of Calicivirus [*RHDV-1*]. We hoped the existing Cylap® vaccine would be effective against K5 as it is immunologically similar to the original *RHDV1*. However no definitive tests had been done. It was a trial by usage situation; undecided. An updated vaccine had been developed in France ... and is now available in Australia.

### **Filavac VHD K C&V.**

Baby Bunnies: Can be given from 10 weeks of age + yearly boosters.  
Older bunnies: ASAP + yearly boosters  
Breeding females: prior to mating, so they can pass strong immunity to the kittens  
In the first milk [colostrum]

**Calicivirus** can be spread by direct contact with infected rabbits or by access to the area they occupied. It can be spread on equipment, bedding, clothing, and via insects such as flies.

Calicivirus is fatal.

Death may be 'sudden' or bunnies may linger, weak with malaise for 3-5 days.

**Safeguards:** Rabbits should be housed in insect-proof enclosures &/or kept inside to protect against both Calicivirus and Myxomatosis [which is also fatal, also spread by insects ... mosquitos and fleas. We have no vaccine for myxomatosis in Australia]

**If you suspect Calicivirus on your premises,** please contact us for advice on viral clean-up precautions.

**Note** This vaccine is very harmful if accidentally injected into a person. Seek immediate medical assistance, taking with you the vaccine packaging & its contained information pamphlet..

Keep your bunnies safe and warm with delicious food treats for a few days post-vac. Some may be sulky, off their food and febrile the day after .... contact us if this occurs, for a relief package of anti-inflammatory therapy and high energy/high protein easy feed supplement.

### **About RABBITS.**

Please don't think of rabbits as an "Easy-Care" pet, and don't expect them to be "cheap"  
They get bored, need toys, friends, interaction with their owners, and about 4 hours of exercise daily.  
They also need a daily bedding change & twice daily feeding.

They like to live in pairs: preferably male+female with both desexed.  
Regardless of their sex, some pairs are just incompatible. Males kept together may fight, & females grouped together seem prone to pseudopregnancy & temper tantrums!

**Lifespan** usually 10 - 12 years, even 20 if well cared for  
Puberty for small breeds: 3 - 4 months; for larger breeds: 5 - 6 months

**Feeding** 80% fresh paddock hay, fresh grasses, some clover & succulents 20% fresh leafy greens

A 2kg bunny needs a 3litre container loosely filled.

For treats: a small carrot or apple.

Minimal pellets. No grain mixes. No vitabrits. No muesli bars. No need for salt or mineral licks

Rabbits will need to eat even twice as much in cold weather, and much more when feeding babies..

For on over-fat bunny: avoid grains & pellets. increase the fibre, & the exercise.

**Coprophagia:** All rabbits eat their own soft “night-faeces”, which are especially formed in their caecum & are very nutritious. If they cannot eat them (perhaps they are too fat! or are kept in wire-based cages) then they may need careful mineral & vitamin supplementation to avoid a ‘tacky bum’ and worsening diarrhoea.

**Rabbit Teeth** grow 2 – 4mm each week life-long,

They are kept worn by the fibre in their food. Ensure your rabbit has high fibre foods every day.

When teeth overgrow, the rabbit will be unable to eat, and dentistry will be needed

Congenital malocclusion can occur, especially with the front [incisor] teeth: this may be obvious from even 3 – 4 weeks of age, and can be a very serious problem

**Housing** Provide warmth, security, hygiene, room to move around, plus access to clean, fresh grass.

**Litter:** All rabbits will eat some of their litter sometimes, so ensure it is safe and non-toxic, organic & preferably based on hay, lucerne, citrus or paper. Newspaper, shredded or folded, is OK.

Deodorisers can be toxic, as can pine or cedar shavings.

Clumping cat litters can clump inside the bunny!

### **Breeding**

Each buck can ‘serve’ up to 15 does.

Non-pregnant does can be taken to a buck at any time, & usually mate within 15 minutes; if they don’t, try again a few days later.

Pregnancy lasts 28 – 35 days (4 – 5 weeks). About 3 days before giving birth, bunnies pluck their belly fur to make a nest, and in the last hour will pass a bloody discharge.

They can mate again within 24 hours of birth.

Females are best separated from male bunnies as soon as they seem pregnant, and kept separate until you want them to be pregnant again!

There are usually 4 - 10 “kittens” in a litter. Born naked and blind, they suckle only once daily.

Their mum leads them out of the nest at about 3 weeks, when they start to eat solids.

Weaning is at 6 – 8 weeks, but may be earlier if the mother is pregnant again.

**ORPHAN BUNNIES** ...Hand-rearing can be hard. Rabbit milk is very strong, very specific. We stock Wombaroo artificial rabbit milk, which is excellent. We also have suitable teats and bottles.

### **General Health:**

**Worming** with Piperazine Syrup is recommended at 3, 6, 9 & 12 weeks, then each 3 months lifelong.

All bunnies should nibble clean grass, and so may contract & recontract worms.

A faecal float, available here, can help determine the worm status of your rabbits.

Young bunnies may suffer **Coccidiosis**, & preventative medication is advised a week before the stress of weaning or rehoming.

**Vaccination for Calicivirus** is due at 10 weeks, or as soon as possible if your rabbit is already older; then a booster is needed each year.

For Myxomatosis there is no vaccination allowed in Australia, nor is there any successful treatment.

Don’t let your bunny get bitten by fleas, mosquitoes or skin-mites. Mosquito-proof housing from dusk to dawn is needed. Advantage [a Bayer product, used monthly, it will stop those fleas biting

And CAUTION Your other Pets may spread problems to your bunny.

Dog Tapeworm can cause deadly cysts in rabbits.

Cats may also transfer Toxoplasmosis..

Don’t let dog or cat faeces contaminate the bunnies’ food.

Free-roaming Cats may also bring home rabbit-fleas, carrying Myxomatosis