

Your handy guide to your rabbit's health

Signs of illness in your bunny can easily creep up, and are often hard to spot. Here's what you should keep an eye out for, and the steps you can take:



Excess urination

Frequent weeing is often triggered by kidney disease, which is commonly caused in rabbits by a parasite called *E. cuniculi*. Watch your pet's toilet habits for changes and be sure to check the underside of his body. This area can develop urine scald (a painful inflammation of the skin) if it becomes wet with urine.



A bad smell

Rabbits who can't clean themselves (for example, due to tooth pain or being overweight) can attract flies, which lay their eggs around the bottom area. These eggs can hatch into maggots that are often hidden by a rabbit's fur. You'll notice a distinctive smell and your bunny may also show signs of pain.



Loss of appetite and bloating

If your rabbit's abdomen seems enlarged or swollen, it can be a sign of gastric stasis and will usually be accompanied by reduced appetite and constipation. If you notice any of these signs, contact your vet immediately.



Drooling

If your rabbit's chin is wet, it could be because of excess salivation – often a result of dental disease. As tooth troubles are likely to cause your rabbit pain, you might also notice changes in his eating habits. For example, your rabbit may have a decreased appetite as a result.



Swelling or pus

Pus in or around the ear canal, or a small swelling at the base of your rabbit's ear, can be a sign of an inner ear infection. In some cases, rabbits don't appear to have any other symptoms, but can have an infection that is already quite far advanced.



Discharge

If you spot a white discharge around your bunny's eyes, along with blocked tear ducts, it can be a result of dental disease as the roots of rabbits' teeth can overgrow and impact the tear ducts. But if your pet's eyes look swollen or bulging, particularly when his head is tipped forwards, it can be a sign of a chest infection that's causing increased internal pressure.



Hunching

If your rabbit's back is always hunched and he doesn't lie stretched out, it could be a sign of discomfort due to arthritis or gut pain. If this is the case, you might also notice changes in your pet's activity levels; but these can be subtle and happen gradually.



Have you noticed any of the symptoms on this list?

Don't hesitate to book an appointment with your vet and, to keep your pet as healthy as possible, schedule regular six-monthly check-ups, too.



Redness and swelling

If the bottom of your rabbit's paws looks inflamed, it can be a sign of pododermatitis. This is usually seen in rabbits that live on very hard or wet areas, those that are overweight, or those that have reduced mobility due to other diseases.

