



Myxomatosis Virus

What is Myxomatosis?

Myxomatosis is a viral infection in rabbits caused by a member of the Poxvirus family. It is deadly to rabbits: the mortality rate has been reported at 99%. It is spread by mosquitoes and fleas that have bitten an infected rabbit. Direct contact with an infected rabbit can also spread the disease. The myxomatosis virus was introduced into Australia in 1950 to reduce the population of wild rabbits.

How is Myxo diagnosed?

Myxo is diagnosis by observing the symptoms and biopsies of the lesions. In many cases the diagnosis is made post-mortem, because of the sudden death of the rabbit.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms may include swelling of the ears, nose, mouth and genitals, conjunctivitis, not eating, lethargy, loss of appetite, fever and lesions.

Are there other conditions that may look like Myxomatosis?

Yes, your vet can determine whether your rabbit might instead have rabbit syphilis, an upper respiratory infection, or an eye infection, all of which are treatable conditions.

What do I do if I suspect my rabbit has Myxo?

Call your rabbit vet straight away and quarantine your rabbit from all other rabbits.

What is the treatment?

Currently there is no effective treatment for Myxomatosis in Australia. Most rabbits die of haemorrhage and or seizures within 10-14 days. Pain medication and sub-q fluids will make a rabbit more comfortable.

There are vaccines in other countries, but the strains of Myxomatosis can be different therefore a vaccine that works in one area may not in another.

How do I protect my rabbits?

- Keep your rabbits indoors at all times.
- Make sure you have screens on all windows or doors that are left open.
- If you have cats or dogs keep them on flea control. The parasite control for mites, which is Revolution, will not protect rabbits from Myxomatosis.
- Eliminate standing water (where mosquitoes might breed) in your yard.
- Avoid going to pet shops, rabbit shows, county fairs and swap meets.