



CALICI VIRUS (RHDV) IN VACCINATED RABBITS

- Vaccinated rabbits that contract Rabbit Calicivirus (RHDV) are **more likely to survive** than unvaccinated rabbits, if they receive immediate vet support.
- If they survive, they may still experience **serious illness or long-term health complications**.
- Some rabbits may show **no obvious clinical signs**, recover, and develop immunity. However, these rabbits can remain **infectious for a month or more**, posing a risk to other rabbits.

Virus Effects in Vaccinated Rabbits

Reduced Mortality

While the virus can cause up to **100% mortality in unvaccinated rabbits**, vaccinated rabbits are more likely to survive.

There is no Cure. Immediate treatment may include fluids, assisted feeding, nutritional support, pain relief, wound care, intensive nursing.

Milder or Subacute Illness

Instead of sudden death, vaccinated rabbits may show: reduced appetite, fever, lethargy, gastrointestinal stasis (gut stasis)

The rabbit may develop wounds from blood clotting on the stomach or elsewhere once treatment commences.

Sudden Death Still Possible

Vaccination does not guarantee full protection. Sudden deaths can still occur in exposed rabbits.

Possible Long-Term Effects of the Virus

Rabbits that survive infection may suffer ongoing health issues due to possible organ damage:

- **Chronic Liver Damage**

Liver injury is common and may be permanent.

- **Weight Loss & Poor Condition**

Difficulty regaining weight and ongoing lethargy.

- **Intermittent Loss of Appetite**

Periods of reduced eating or anorexia.

- **Jaundice (Icterus)**

Yellowing of the skin, eyes, or gums due to liver dysfunction.

- **Neurological Signs**

In some cases:

- Ataxia (poor coordination)
- Paresis (weakness)

- **Possible Kidney Damage**

The virus can affect multiple organs, including the kidneys.

Survival and Immunity

- Rabbits that survive generally develop **strong immunity to that specific strain**.
- Illness in vaccinated rabbits may last **weeks**, compared to the rapid 1–3 day death often seen in unvaccinated rabbits.
- Survivors require **ongoing veterinary care** due to the potential of lasting organ damage.

Key Aspects of Care

Vaccination

Annual vaccination (e.g. Filavac) is the most effective protection, though immunity can decrease over time.

Minimise Exposure

- Avoid contact with wild rabbits
- Be aware the virus can spread via: Clothing, Shoes, Insects

Environmental Control

The virus is extremely hardy and can survive for **months** in the environment.

Cleaning and Disinfectant

Effective hygiene is critical to prevent spread.

Fabrics (towels, bedding, clothing)

- Soak in **1:10 bleach solution** for at least **10 minutes**
- Dry in direct sunlight or a hot clothes dryer

Surfaces

- Use **F10 veterinary disinfectant**
- Leave for **15 minutes** before drying

Rooms & Enclosures

- Remove all animals and people
- Use an **F10 aerosol fogger** (works similar to a flea bomb) This disinfects walls, floors, and furnishings