



Rabbit Calicivirus

Rabbit haemorrhagic disease virus (RHDV1), previously known as Rabbit Calicivirus (RCV), is a fatal virus of rabbits that has been used as a biocontrol to reduce the number feral rabbits in Australia since 1996. There is a vaccine for several of the released strains however a new strain has been identified in the wild. The calicivirus vaccination vaccine is only partially protective to this new strain.

The virus is easily spread by direct contact between rabbits and anything contaminated with the virus (eg infected rabbit, hay, bedding, grass, unwashed hands, flies, birds, rodents etc). The virus is extremely stable, meaning it can survive a long time in the environment.

Protecting Pet Rabbits - Things you should know

In Australia there is only 1 vaccine available to protect rabbits against RCV/RHDV - Cyclap.

The vaccine provides good protection for the strains of RCD released to control feral rabbits. This vaccine is far from ideal; it provides only limited protection against the "wild" type of virus (RHDV2).

To maximise the vaccine's ability to protect your rabbit experts have recommended the use of this vaccine every 6 months. This is more often than it was registered, however 6 monthly vaccination has not been linked to any negative health risks.

The vaccine is only available in a 10 dose vial. And the manufacturer has only registered it for use for 12 hours after opening.

While many vets have used this vaccine for many weeks after opening the bottle...the risk of side effects and inadequate protection are increased. It is cost prohibitive to open a fresh bottle of vaccine every day. It would drive to cost of rabbit vaccinations up to greater than \$200!

We do not wish to put your rabbit at any more risk than is absolutely necessary. Rabbit specialist veterinarians advised us that they use the vaccine for 7 days and then discard any remaining vaccine. We have decided to provide the highest standards of care for your rabbit by holding Rabbit Vaccination Days once a month at each of our clinics. This will

enable us to provide you with the freshest and safest vaccination for your rabbit.

We will still be able to vaccinate your rabbit at other times during the month, however like at other vet clinics we will not be able to guarantee the freshness of the vaccine if not done on our Vaccination Days.

We understand that fitting in with the limited timing of our vaccination days may be an inconvenience, we are endeavoring to ensure the best care for your rabbit.