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## **Preventing Myxomatosis infection in rabbits**

Myxomatosis (Myxi/Myxo) is a virus that was released in Australia in the 1950's to control wild rabbit populations. The virus is spread by biting insects (mosquitoes, lice fleas, mites, flies), most notably mosquitoes, as well as direct transmission from an infected rabbit. There is no vaccine available in Australia for this disease so the following preventative measures are required to reduce the risk of insect bites, and thus your rabbit being infected. Although there is no guaranteed method of prevention, the following tips will reduce the risk of your rabbit being infected with the myxomatosis virus.

It is important to:

- ✓ Use insect-proof gauze around the hutch
- ✓ Bring your rabbit indoors between dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active
- ✓ Ensure wild rabbits cannot enter your yard and contact your pet
- ✓ Remove any free standing water in yard, that may attract insects
- ✓ Ensure effective flea prevention is used on all household pets (advocate for cats 0.1 mL/kg monthly on rabbit). DO NOT use fipronil based products on rabbits.
- ✓ Insect repellents such as citronella coils, flares and candles. DO NOT apply citronella sprays and oils directly to your rabbit. Odourless Aerogard can be sprayed into hands and gently applies to the rabbit's coat, avoiding their eyes and mouth.

If you have had an infected rabbit:

- ✓ Isolate all other rabbits
- ✓ Thoroughly disinfect your rabbit hutch, water bottles and food bowls with household bleach, rinsing it off so that it cannot be ingested by any other rabbits.
- ✓ Bringing a new rabbit home is not recommended for at least four months after a case of myxomatosis as the virus is able to survive in the environment for some time.

Signs of myxomatosis include:

- Swollen of eyes, ears, anus and genitals
- Discharge from eyes and nose
- Lethargy, inappetance and fever.

**IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS ABOUT YOUR PET, PLEASE**

**CONTACT US ON (02) 6926 0900.**

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