

## WHAT IS RABBIT HEMORRHAGIC DISEASE VIRUS (RHDV)?

Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Virus (RHDV) is a highly contagious and potentially deadly viral infection affecting rabbits and hares.

RHDV1 was first identified in the 1980's in China and is now endemic in many countries among wild rabbits and hares.

The new strain of concern, RHDV2, was first identified in 2010 in France. This new strain differs from the original strain in that it is deadlier than RHDV1 and it affects both wild and domestic rabbits.

In 2018, RHDV2 was first confirmed in North America in British Columbia. On June 10, 2022, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) reported that there were two confirmed cases of RHDV2 in Lambton County near Sarnia, Ontario. The CFIA confirmed on July 5, 2022 that there was one case of RHDV2 in Essex County near Windsor, Ontario. The CFIA says there were three other rabbits in the home who were placed under quarantine and who did not appear to be infected.

More detailed information about RHDV2 is available through the following web sites:

- Worms & Germs:  
<https://www.wormsandgermsblog.com/2022/06/articles/animals/pocket-pets/rabbit-hemorrhagic-disease-in-ontario-canada/>
- The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA):  
<https://inspection.canada.ca/animal-health/terrestrial-animals/diseases/immediately-notifiable/rhd-or-viral-haemorrhagic-disease-of-rabbits/eng/1530824799434/1530824799683>
- The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA):  
<http://omafra.gov.on.ca/english/food/inspection/ahw/industry-rabbit-hemorrhagic.htm>

## HOW OUR CLINIC IS RESPONDING

We are pleased to announce that the RHDV vaccine is now available at our clinic! Please read the following information on how to book an appointment for your rabbit(s). Current clients will be prioritized at this time.

### Important Things To Know!

- Your rabbit(s) must be 10 weeks or older in order to receive the vaccine.
- A physical examination is required in order to administer the vaccine. The cost for an exam is included in the vaccine price.

- If you have any questions regarding the RHDV vaccine appointment process, please email us at [flahlabs@gmail.com](mailto:flahlabs@gmail.com)
- While we understand that our clients may have concerns about RHDV2, we would like to reassure you that it should not be cause for immediate alarm.

## **HOW TO KEEP YOUR RABBIT SAFE**

RHDV2 is highly contagious and can be spread among rabbits through direct contact with bodily fluids and droppings. It can also spread by fomite transmission, meaning it can live on objects and infect rabbits who have contact with affected surfaces such as cages, bedding, food and people's clothing. It is also known to travel on the tires of vehicles that have driven through areas with infected rabbits.

Implementing proper biosecurity measures can help protect your rabbit.

These include:

- Keep your rabbits indoors and ensure they can't come into contact with wild rabbits or their droppings
- Limit contact between indoor pet rabbits from different households
- Limit contact between your rabbits and people who are in contact with other rabbits
- Prevent your rabbits from having contact with shoes and clothing worn outside and keep this clothing separate from those worn indoors.
- Ensure your rabbit is protected from ticks and fleas with preventative medication.

## **CAN RHDV INFECT HUMANS AND OTHER ANIMALS?**

No. RHDV1 and RHDV2 only affects rabbits and hares.