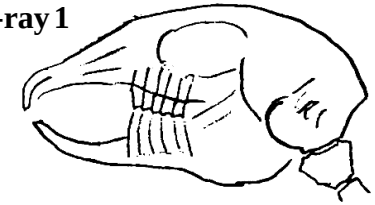
Rabbit Dental Problems

What goes wrong?

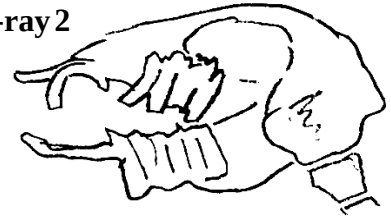
A rabbit's teeth are growing and wearing down constantly. Teeth that are normal and healthy can become abnormal and painful over just a few weeks. If teeth wear unevenly razor sharp edges and needle-like spikes can develop cutting the cheeks and the tongue. If roots grow abnormally they can break out through the skull under the eye, and through the jaw bone causing abscesses, pain and weight loss. Early detection and treatment are vital. If your rabbit is off food or is wet around the mouth it is important that the vet examines the teeth immediately before your rabbit becomes seriously ill.

X-ray 1



Normal healthy teeth and roots

X-ray 2



Deformed teeth and roots

Why do rabbits get dental problems?

1. FUSSY EATERS. Rabbits can be very fussy eaters. When fed rabbit mix they tend to pick out the grain with low calcium content. This results in poor bone structure of the skull. The teeth become unstable and grow in the wrong direction (see X-ray 2). The roots push through the bone resulting in abscesses of the jaw and face.

2. WRONG TYPES OF FOOD.

Too much rich, easy to eat food such as pellets, apple, lettuce, carrot etc. can result in the teeth not having enough work to do and not being worn down fast enough. A tough fibrous diet is best - lots of hay, grass fibrous weeds or leaves.

3. CONGENITAL FACTORS

Some rabbits are just more prone to dental problems than others.

Your rabbit's dental treatment

● Trimming of overgrown incisors can usually be done with the patient awake but has to be repeated regularly. We recommend extraction of abnormal incisors (under anaesthetic). Once extracted they generally do not re-grow and rabbits manage to eat well without them.

● Most other rabbit dental problems require a general anaesthetic and X-rays of the skull. Your rabbit will need to be with us from about 9.00am until 4.00pm. If finances allow we prefer to do a blood test to check on general health, especially kidney function. Under anaesthetic the teeth can be examined in detail. Sharp edges and spikes are trimmed and loose teeth are extracted. deformed molars often need to to cut back to gumlevel. Some regrow to give trouble a few months later. Lacerations to the tongue and cheeks may need treatment. Rabbits with abscesses may require quite major surgery to correct the problem. Not all cases can be treated successfully.

Name Date

Your Rabbit's Dental Assessment✸

❑ **HEALTHY MOUTH -** Incisors and molars apparently normal. Tongue and cheeks undamaged. Rabbit Health Insurance advised.

❑ **MINOR DENTAL PROBLEMS** - Weak enamel, some early dental deformity. Ensure feeding routine is correct - for details see our Rabbit Health Check.

NEXT CHECK UP IN THREE MONTHS.

❑ **ABNORMAL MOUTH**

- Incisors overgrown - require regular clipping, or, ideally, extraction.
- Molars - sharp edges and spikes require examination and correction under anaesthetic. Outlook fair.

❑ **SERIOUS DENTAL PROBLEMS**

- Mouth pain from overgrown or sharp teeth. Visible damage to cheeks and/or tongue. Requires anaesthetic, investigation and X-rays. Outlook guarded.
- As above PLUS evidence of root disease, eye discgarge or eye pain, swelling of mandible and/or face, abscess formation. Requires anaesthetic, investigation and X-rays.

✸ Based on clinical examination. Full examination is not possible without a general anaesthetic.

● ***We use Isoflurane, the safest and best anaesthetic for rabbits.***
We monitor all our patients using a Pulse Oxymeter.

Anaesthetic, dental clipping / trimming £
Anaesthetic, dental inc. extractions £
+ Blood Tests to check general health (recommended) £
+ Dental X-rays - £ I/V Fluids £

These fees include the first check-up consultation and VAT. They do not include drugs.

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See our web site www.vet-healthcentre.co.uk for more about dental problems

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