

# Skin Disease

There is a whole host of skin problems that rabbits can suffer, some of which we have already covered in the parasites section (mites, fleas and ticks being the culprits).

Sore hocks is a condition whereby the skin over the hocks (heels) of the rabbit become sore, inflamed and susceptible to infection. It is usually caused by trauma, urine scald. Urine scald may be due to a urine infection or prolonged contact with urine due to lack of a clean hygienic environment. Treating the underlying cause with medication, or improved hutch hygiene, is key to preventing future outbreaks.



Rabbits suffer from abscesses quite commonly, due to a variety of reasons such as fighting, trauma, dental infections etc. The abscesses tend to develop a thick walled capsule around them which makes it difficult for antibiotics to effectively access the bacteria in order to kill them. Therefore it is important to spot an abscess early, and start medication s soon as possible. If that is not successful then we often have to surgically remove, or open up the abscess, and place antibiotic impregnated beads directly into the abscess.

Flystrike is a distressing condition most commonly seen in the summer. Flies are attracted to rabbits' bottoms if there is any faecal matter or urine sticking to the rabbit. Once they are there they lay eggs which then hatch out as maggots. These maggots then start attacking the rabbit and will burrow under their skin and can cause extensive tissue damage. Many rabbits have to be euthanased when suffering from fly strike. Fly strike can happen very quickly so it is important to be vigilant, especially over the summer. Check your rabbits daily and make sure their bottom is clean (if not you must bathe them). As soon as you think you can see fly strike seek Veterinary attention.

