

What is Flystrike?

Flystrike (also known as Myiasis) occurs when a certain type of fly lays eggs on a rabbit's skin (usually around the bottom). Flies are attracted to the smell of faeces, urine and scent glands.

This is an awful condition because the eggs quickly hatch and the maggots chew their way into the rabbit's skin. This can happen within hours and is very often fatal due to toxic shock or infection.

Signs and symptoms of Flystrike

Although live maggots are the most obvious sign of flystrike in your rabbit, live maggots may not be the first thing you notice.

Other signs of a rabbit with flystrike include:

Your rabbit becoming quiet and tired

Lack of appetite

Stopping drinking

A strong smell from them or from the hutch

All rabbits should have their bottoms checked twice daily, especially in summer.



Even if you cannot see live maggots, if your rabbit seems unwell, always take them to see your vet. Rabbits naturally hide being unwell, so if they are showing signs of distress they are often quite sick.

Tips to keep your pets safe

The best prevention is by keeping your rabbit clean and in good health, and applying Preventive treatments in peak season.

- Check your rabbit is eating a healthy diet. Upset digestive system can lead to diarrhoea which will attract flies.
- Remove soiled bedding every day and disinfect hutches weekly.
- Fly screens and fly killers such as sticky fly paper can be hung in the home or close to your rabbit's hutch.
- Preventative measures such as 'Rearguard' can be purchased. It is a liquid that is applied to the rabbit and prevents flystrike for up to 10 weeks by preventing maggots maturing to a stage where they can become dangerous.



What to do if you find maggots on your rabbit...

Do not try to simply clean the rabbit yourself. Flystrike is an emergency and treatment cannot wait. It is a very serious condition and sadly it is often fatal.

Telephone the veterinary surgery immediately.