



Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Virus (RHDV) FAQ

What is RHDV2?

- Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Virus 2 (RHDV2) is a deadly rabbit disease that has been identified in Orange County.
- RHDV2 is a highly contagious calicivirus that can cause signs of fever, lethargy, poor appetite, neurologic signs, blood from body orifices and sudden death in rabbit species.
- This virus is specific to rabbits and hares; it cannot infect humans or other animals. This disease is often fatal carrying up to a 70% fatality rate.

How do rabbits become infected with the virus?

- This virus is transmitted via direct contact with infected rabbits (oral, nasal, conjunctival routes), and indirectly via shared bedding, feed, water and by vectors, such as insects.

How do I protect my domestic rabbit(s)?

- House rabbits indoors when possible and ensure housing does not permit access to or contact with wild rabbits.
- Do not use materials or offer plants from outside to your rabbit(s).
- Keep new rabbits and their supplies separated from existing rabbits for at least 2 weeks.
- Clean and disinfect tools, caging, footwear, enclosures, feed/water containers, and other equipment between rabbits. Do not share equipment with others who raise rabbits.
- Always wash your hands before and after handling your rabbits; wash between handling rabbits in different pens.
- Protect feed from contamination by flies, birds, rodents, etc.
- Do not handle any rabbits that are not yours. If you do, wash your hands and change clothes prior to interacting with your rabbit.
- If your rabbit seems ill, contact your veterinarian immediately.

Is there a vaccine against RHDV2?

- There is no vaccine against this disease that is licensed in the United States. In cases of emergency, the vaccine may be approved for use. At this time, OC Animal Care (OCAC) is working with other sheltering agencies to import the vaccine for use in protecting domestic rabbits that may enter the shelter. It should be noted that this vaccine is not 100% protective.

What is OC Animal Care (OCAC) doing to protect rabbits from RHDV2?

- OCAC discourages relinquishment of rabbits to the shelter and encourages utilizing rehoming services such as <https://rehome.adoptapet.com/> or <https://home-home.org/> directly to limit rabbit exposures.
- OCAC participates in identifying and reporting of sick rabbits to California Fish and Wildlife and California Food and Agriculture departments, which are responsible for testing for and monitoring the disease in California.
- OCAC is partnering with other sheltering agencies to acquire the vaccine in order to help protect domestic rabbits that may enter the shelter.

For additional information about RHDV2, visit the CDFA Animal Health Branch website at https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/AHFSS/Animal_Health/RHD.html



OC Animal Care

