

Medicine chest

This is what we keep in the medicine chest- many of these can be found in your local human pharmacy.

YOU might not need all of these things. Since our rabbit herd is over 100 animals and we live 30 miles from where we can get most of it, it makes it cost effective for us to have some of these items on hand.

Essentials- things we don't want to have to make a trip to the store for

Liquid Imodium AD

Vetericyn spray (we use the basic spray for everything even eyes)

Baby gas drops (Simethicone)

Triple antibiotic ointment (Neosporin)

Ivomec

Some sort of coccidian treatment (Albion, Sulmet, Dri-tail)

Apple cider vinegar

Other medications and items we like to keep on hand

Terramycin ointment

Pen BP-48 (long acting subcutaneous antibiotic) NEVER give rabbits oral antibiotics

Homeopathic Arnica

Marquis

Saline solution (for washing hair irritants out of bunny eyes)

Disinfectants

We use Vanodine on rabbits AND cages both. Bunnies get a spray down when they come back home after the show, we use it for wounds and as a final spray when cleaning cages.

Bleach- kills most bacteria and viruses. We clean water bottles and feeders with bleach 3-4 times a year. (or if they start looking dirty) DO NOT use at the same time as ammonia

Ammonia- useful for battling coccidian DO NOT use at the same time as bleach

Rabbit Health

DISCLAIMER: we are NOT vets, nor do we claim to be.

Always use advice at your own risk. We are not “prescribing” and the best thing for bunny is to have a good bunny vet.

This being said we have found not many vets are rabbit savvy.

Here we will offer some insight and links so you can make up your own mind on the health care of your precious buns.



Birthing Problems

BEFORE you breed your rabbits, be prepared there is always some danger involved with birthing. NEVER breed your rabbits just so you can “See them have babies” Breeding should be a very thoughtful process and never done without the goal of improving your breed. Small breeds produce babies that carry the double dwarf gene-we call them "peanuts" and this is a lethal combo for the babies. You will see them waste away and die usually within a week of birth. Does must be watched carefully to make sure they are not too fat or too thin at time of birth, and throughout the 7-8 week period the young ones remain with her. That being said, choosing GOOD livestock and producing a wanted litter of babies can be very rewarding despite the oft times heartache.

SOMETIMES you will have a doe who is late going into labor (past her 31 day gestation length or 35 for large breeds) we NEVER try to induce before the 31 days is up (don't guess- verify by the calendar) BUT on our dwarf breeds if they have not given birth by the end of day 31 we will give them a VERY SMALL dose of oxytocin. YOU MUST USE a insulin (1 cc) syringe to do this accurately. Too much oxytocin will be lethal to your rabbits. A dosage of .15 of a cc is more than enough to get most does "started" and be prepared because they will give birth fast and you will have to do the cleaning of the babies. We usually only do this when we are fearing the doe may be carrying only one baby. Too long gestation with a single can result in a fetal giant and may be hard for the doe to give birth.

Sometimes when you induce in this manner it is best to give them an empty nestbox and put the babies in one you have prepared only putting them in to feed for the first couple of days, as it can throw their normal mothering "off". *ONLY USE oxytocin under the guidance of a VET!*

Some other "inductions methods" that may or may not work is re-breeding, giving a piece of yam, exercising the bunny (running it around a bit), feeding fresh oregano.

Most of the time it is best to wait for mother nature.

Diarrhea

First GET HELP FROM A RABBIT SAVY VET IMMEDIATELY!

Second STOP the diarrhea anyway possible.

We keep liquid Imodium (for humans) on hand (dosage in Squirt Article found in Extra information in the back of this book)

Thirdly HYDRATE and keep them eating. This may mean you are feeding them “survival foods”. We have been know to hydrate/feed by mixing a tablespoon of canned pumpkin with a teaspoon of molasses and about a Tablespoon of water. This is sucked up into a syringe and

gently and slowly fed to the bunny. Do not "push" too fast because the rabbit can easily choke. Often putting a little molasses in a bowl of water and offering hay and old fashioned oatmeal in place of regular food will help bunny be more interested in eating. We also like fresh willow leaves (natural aspirin)

Rabbits become off balance so fast that this will kill quickly.

We love this article <http://www.bio.miami.edu/hare/squirts.pdf>

Marquis Paste- this stuff is expensive and comes in horse sized tubes. You will have to find a vet willing to prescribe it. HOWEVER- if you have a coccidia problem- this stuff will really help.

For use in treatment of coccidia in dogs, cats and rabbits over 3 weeks of age.

How to mix: 5cc of Marquis Paste with 12cc water. Store in light sensitive container. Shake thoroughly before administered.

Dosage: use 1cc mixed solution per 5 pounds of animal.

Sulmet 12.5% solution

For use in treatment of coccidia

1cc per 10lb then 1/2 cc per pound the next days orally ensures that they get the meds. We personally think it is better to drench the rabbit daily than to put it in their drinking water and trust that they drink enough for it to work.

Heat and ammonia kill the coccidian- cages and pans should be cleaned at least every 3 days until the problem is eradicated. Use 10% ammonia solution (1 part ammonia to 9 parts water) scrub it and let it air dry. We have also used a steam disinfectant or a propane torch on cages and pans to help get rid of coccidian oocytes. If there is poop they will re-infect themselves.

Ear Mites

We use ivermectin injectable for cattle at the dosage rate of .05 cc per pound of weight. This is given orally.

We use an insulin syringe (1 cc syringe with .1 markings) to draw it up so that we can accurately dose smaller rabbits.

You won't see ear mites, but you might notice excessive scratching at their ears or the rabbit has a waxy red buildup in their ear. Its earmites! Give them the dosage recommended of Ivermectin for worming, and clean their ears thoroughly.

Fleas

Ivermectin won't get fleas because they are not a "sucking" parasite, they are a biting parasite.

Advantage is what we use for the rare occasion we get fleas. Believe me, a whole rabbitry with fleas is not a fun thing. We acquired them when the fleas were bad in the yard and the youngest took her bunny for a walk on his bunny harness. They spread quickly and were hard to kill. We used Sevin dust on the floors of the rabbitry, and Advantage flea treatment for the bunnies. The secret to doing this successfully and economically is to buy the Large dog dose packs and put it into the insulin syringes. One drop is about equal to 1 tenth cc and we use one drop per pound.

MAKE SURE you get the PLAIN advantage, not advantix or advantage II. They have chemicals not tolerated by the bunnies. You want the Imidacloprid active ingredient and nothing else.

Kansas State has recently released an article that suggests selamectin (Revolution) use for rabbits.

<http://www.k-state.edu/media/newsreleases/aug10/selamectin83010.html>

"Veterinarians who were using selamectin based on dog and cat dosages were giving it at too low a dose and less frequently than needed," Carpenter said. "We're recommending 15 to 20 milligrams per kilogram topically every seven days for flea infestations in a rabbit."

Heat Stroke

When a rabbit has been in above 90 degree heat they can easily get heat stroke. This usually means death for the rabbit.

Helpful preventatives are mister systems, air conditioning, frozen 2 liter bottles of water, spraying the bunnies down with water in the heat of the day.

BUT if they start panting, stretching out and looking lethargic or have wet noses/muzzles. You may have heat stroke.

We keep a homeopathic remedy that we use on EVERYONE in our home. It is called arnica montana (30x dosage), it is good for bruises, injuries and best of all SHOCK. The first thing we do is poke 2 of these tablets in a syringe with about 2 ccs of water and squirt it well back in the back of the bunnies mouth.

The next thing is to cool the rabbit down quickly. Dipping it in a bucket of cool water, rubbing ice on its ears or putting an ice pack in the groin area- moving it to a cooler place quick. These are all things that may help you give the rabbit a chance to survive. The rabbit will be VERY susceptible to relapse if it recovers after this, you will likely need to keep it in the house in a cool place for a couple of weeks.

Orphans.

My best advice FIND FRESH GOAT MILK and do NOT pasteurize, CLEAN your bottles carefully. Old fashioned oats and fresh hay at all times. Check out goodharedaze.com website for our article on orphans. They are very hard to keep living.

Snuffles (Snotty nose)

DO NOT take a rabbit with a snotty nose ANYWHERE.

While there is a possibility it is only an allergy, it could be a Pasturella or Snuffles.

There is a HUGE difference between a little wet around the nasal area, and a white or green discharge from the nostrils. Do not endanger your other bunnies or other peoples bunnies- isolate a rabbit with a snotty nose until the cause is determined.

Our first plan of attack at a wet nose is to ask if the barn was recently cleaned, allergens are high, was the rabbit given hay, did you change bedding? Any of these could mean the rabbit is having a simple allergic reaction to its surroundings. For this we give them a small dose of children's Benadryl (1 cc per 4 lbs) if that is what it was- this will clear it up in 2-3 daily doses. Bunnies with allergies usually do NOT have wet or crusty front paws from wiping their nose. We have actually had bunnies get things lodged up their noses. This is the second thing we check for.

If in doubt OR the snot is white or green take the rabbit to the vet for a pasturella swab. This is VERY catching and although it can be controlled with antibiotics, it is always communicable- so for other bunnies safety that bunny can never be allowed around any other

rabbits, even when its nose is NOT snotty. Never buy a bunny that has front paws that seem crusty or wet. This is a good sign it is a sick rabbit.

Sore Hocks

Some rabbits are prone to what we call sore hocks, or sore places on the bottom of their feet. Make sure rabbits that show signs of wearing the fur off their feet have clean resting boards available at all times. If they get scabs on their feet, you can treat them with Neosporin, Preparation H (hemorrhoid cream) or Bag Balm. Again- watch the feet for “naked spots” this is a sign they need a better place to rest their feet. Keep your resting boards spotlessly clean.

Teeth (Malocclusion)

So we had our first bunny with malocclusion or wolf teeth? OH no! he was such a pretty friendly little guy too! Well, in all likely hood that was what started his whole problem. Little Amethyst would shake the cage door until the whole SET of cages would start rocking. Why you ask?- He wanted his ears scratched and a sunflower seed or two. So when he was 8 weeks old we were horrified to realize his bottom teeth were extending in front of his top ones! Since we did realize that his problem could be his habits and not genetics- we started on a tooth trimming routine, and made sure he always had plenty of hay and sticks to chew on. We found this great video on YouTube Then just after he turned 4 months old- Voila! the teeth are magically back in alignment. He just needed a bit of time to outgrow it.

Now there will be some rabbits that this is a genetic problem. AND you can NOT show a rabbit that is having its teeth trimmed. HOWEVER, if they have time to grow back out naturally and are still in alignment, then the rabbit may be shown. *Genetic tooth issues should be culled from the breeding herd.*

Weepy eye

Just because a bunny gets weepy eye don't panic, some will tell you its a sign of pasteurilla (snuffles) and while it COULD be... it could also just be a mild bacterial infection due to dust, hay or hair getting in the eye. The thing that worked best for us? Terrymycin optical ointment We used it twice a day for 3 days and the eye was all better! This was after the vet first trying some neomycin eye drops. (our advice skip the drops ask the vet if the ointment would work!) We have also recently used with great success a product called Vetericyn. It is painfully expensive- and totally worth it.

We HAVE had one bunny who had allergies- when it got bad we would give him 1 cc of children's Benadryl orally. (he weighed about 4 lbs) once a day for several days and it really helped him.

Worming and Wool Mites

We use ivomec injectable for cattle at the dosage rate of .05 cc per pound of weight. This is given orally.

We use an insulin syringe to draw it up so that we can accurately dose smaller rabbits.

This will also take care of ear mites and wool mites.

We don't put it on food or treats, we don't use the paste for horses as it is harder to get an accurate dosage. We remove the needle from the syringe after drawing it out and stick it well

back into the corner of the bunnies mouth (you don't get bit that way) and push the plunger. Its oily enough they can't spit it out.

Wry neck

First off get yourself over to Bobbi Brown's website and read her Wry neck page . We have had two bunnies with this problem and both were completely cured. AND once we had started the bunnies on a quarterly worming with ivomec we have never since had this problem. I agree with Barbi that wry neck is caused by a parasite and not pasturella. The key was fairly high doses of ivomec and neck massage treatments. One rabbit was so bad it nearly looked like its head was on upside down. We use the cattle injectable and give it at the rate of 1 tenth cc per pound of rabbit- this is about twice the dose suggested for regular worming. This must be repeated in 7 days- DO NOT FAIL to repeat the dose at this period. Make sure the bunny has water in a dish so that they do not get further stressed, and we added dried oatmeal to their food along with plenty of fresh hay, and cleaned the cage out of old hay once a day. While you can actually give this dose orally, we gave it subcutaneous injection on the loose skin at the nape of the neck. I used my knowledge of accupressure on humans and gave the bunnies a twice daily massage and flexed the neck so that the muscles didn't atrophy during the "tilt".

Vent Disease- Rabbit Syphilis

Watch for scabby or pimply areas on bunny's vent area- it may be rabbit syphilis or vent disease. We have found recommendations on the internet to use Pen BP-48(300,000 iu per ml) at a dosage of .0625 cc per pound. That works out to .25 ml/cc for a 4 lb bunny. You will need that 1 cc syringe again for accurate dosage. This medication is labeled for cattle only so verify with your vet. It is a sub-subcutaneous shot- that means under the skin. This disease can make your bunnies sterile- so it is best to treat it quickly. We dose once and again in a week. Clean cage well before second dose and sterilize with something like bleach or Vanodine