

## What does your bunny's poo tell you?



When a bunny produces lovely round, spherical, dry poos containing lots of fibre, this is ideal! This means that your bunny is eating lots of hay and is well hydrated. We love seeing bunny poos just like this!

If you see these dark, shiny masses of sticky poos, they are called cecals or cecotropes. These are the vitamin pills that our bunnies usually produce overnight and reingest. Rabbits have developed this very clever system by giving themselves a second chance of eating the nutrients that they require. If your bunny produces too many of these cecals, it may be that their diet is too rich. If you are at all concerned, please call us for some advice.



If you see bunny poos like this, it could mean that your bunny is not feeling too well and needs a vet visit. A large 'cow pat' can indicate a few health issues and a checkup is a good idea.



If you see that your bunny's poos look much smaller in shape, harder than normal and darker in colour (pictured as the tiny poos next to the giant normal poos), your bunny may be feeling dehydrated and should visit a vet for a full health check.



If you notice that your bunny has not been pooping at all, this is a cause of concern. The longer that your bunny does not produce any poo or eat/drink is a serious health concern. Please visit your vet as soon as you can.

## Parasitic nasties - Coccidia

Coccidia are parasites that invade the intestinal tract. There are 12 species associated with rabbits and a single rabbit can have two or more species at one time. Many (most) healthy rabbits have non clinical infections. Coccidia is a common disease of rabbits kept in crowded conditions and breeding facilities. It is often diagnosed in newly acquired young rabbits, usually 2 weeks after going home!. Intensive, damp and unhygienic conditions predispose a rabbit to coccidia.



Oocysts (immature eggs - pictured) are passed in faeces and will become infective in 2 or more days. In damp conditions with vegetative matter present they can remain in the environment for years. Other rabbits are infected by eating contaminated fresh vegetation (grass etc) or walking on infected ground.

Young rabbits can be very susceptible, especially if introduced into an area of high environmental oocysts, or stress of change. Infection can result in a blockage of the bile duct and an enlarged liver with oocyst filled cysts present. Clinically this can be seen as weight loss, accumulation of fluid, jaundice and diarrhea, depending on severity of infection. Infected

young are often underweight and have pot-bellied appearance and can be depressed and lethargic. It is also seen with sudden collapse causing low blood glucose.

It can also be seen when a rabbit should pass away suddenly, although it may not be the main cause of death. Coccidia can cause immune suppression and cause a worsening of other underlying disease (dental disease etc). It can also co-exist with other conditions seen with dense housing rates. (eg E.coli infection, Sepsis, Pasturella etc). These can all in turn cause anorexia and subsequent fatty liver and death.

# Opening Hours

Monday, Tues, Wed & Friday - 9am-5pm

Thursday - 9am-8pm

Saturday - 9am-1pm

Phone: (03) 9758 9879 Fax: (03) 9758 1193

Prevention of disease relies on good hygiene, daily cleaning of hay trays and keeping the bedding dry. Feed from uncontaminated bowls and hay/salad racks, rather than allowing the rabbit to feed off the floor. If rabbits are allowed access to an outdoor run, moving the run around the garden reduces the number of oocysts they are exposed to. Strong ultraviolet light from the sun helps disinfect the ground and destroy the oocysts. A reduction in the number of rabbits housed together is essential and minimise introducing transient groups of rabbits.



## Pinworms

Pinworms are common in pet rabbits but often do not cause a problem. However, they can be seen in the faeces of rabbits that live in large colonies, or rabbits with other conditions causing stress. Adult worms are predominantly found in the anterior portion of the caecum and large intestine. Juvenile stages are found in the small intestinal and caecal mucosa.

Pinworms are passed from rabbit to rabbit by ingestion of food that has been infected. Good hygiene will assist with breaking the cycle of pinworms by changing the litter tray daily, washing water bowls thoroughly and offering greens on a tray or in a bowl instead of placing on the floor.

If you are concerned about pinworms or coccidia it is best to undertake a faecal float prior to treating. Many of the common brands of 'worming syrups' will not treat both of these conditions. Neither pinworms nor coccidia are contagious to humans

## Christmas Boarding

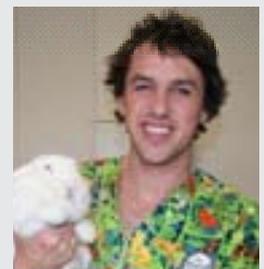
The holidays are not very far away and we all wish you a very merry Christmas! If you are planning a summer holiday over the Christmas season and you need somewhere for your bunny to holiday whilst you are away, please think of booking your boarding facility early.

The Melbourne Rabbit Clinic has a list of rabbit and guinea pig boarding facilities that should be able to help you.



## Locum vet Dr James Haberfield

Whilst Dr Narelle Walter is overseas for two weeks in October at a conference to learn more about our fluffy friends, the Melbourne Rabbit Clinic will be very lucky to have Dr James Haberfield as our locum.



Dr James Haberfield is the owner and founder of The Unusual Pet Vets in Western Australia.

Dr Haberfield's main interests include reptile, amphibian, bird, rabbit, ferret, guinea pig and other small animal medicine and surgery. He is also involved in a range of field work activities in WA from microchipping Western Spiny tailed skinks to filming King Cobras in India all the way through to trapping rock wallabies in the wheat belt of Western Australia.

Dr Haberfield will be at the clinic between 20 – 31 October.