

# WHEN THE HEAT IS ON!



When it hits summer in Melbourne, we can unexpectedly reach temperatures into the 40's. We know that this heat is extreme, but to rabbits, anything over 28 degrees can be a danger to their health. In the wild, rabbits would dig underground to relieve the stress of heat. In our backyards, they cannot retreat from hot temperatures and this can result in gut stasis, extreme moulting and in more serious situations, heatstroke.

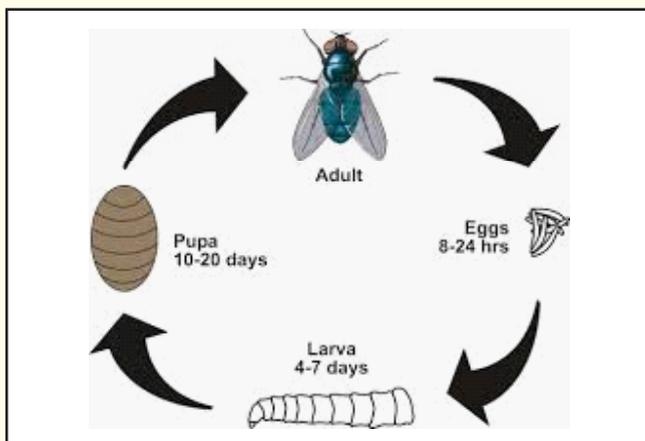
Rabbits prefer cooler conditions and on hot days, the best thing you can do for your bunny is to bring them indoors, particularly if you have air conditioning or cooling fans. If you find it more comfortable indoors with the cooler on, they will definitely be happier too.

In the situation where your rabbit may be outdoors in the heat and they are found to be lethargic and weak, please rush your bunny to the nearest vet. Please do not wash or wet your rabbit in this condition as this may send a rabbit into shock and could be fatal.

## "Flystrike"

In the event of rabbits living outside, particularly rabbits with long fur, overweight or suffer from a dirty bottom, flies can invade and lay eggs on damp, dirty skin or an open wound. The job of a fly is to lay eggs in a warm, damp environment and to provide food for the larvae. The larvae, when hatched from the eggs, will dig into the tissue of the rabbit and nibble on the skin. This situation is life threatening to a rabbit as the larvae dig deep into the skin causing irritation and pain.

If you find that your rabbit has flystrike, please rush your bunny to the nearest rabbit friendly vet for attention & care. Please do not try & remove the larvae yourself as this will cause further stress on the rabbit and as most of the larvae are found deep under the skin layer, this will require extra attention available from a vet clinic.



## Grooming

Long haired rabbits suffer the most when it comes to the summer heat. Rabbit fur is thick, fine and retains heat easily. This is great for winter & cold climates but during the Australian summer, it can be very uncomfortable for your bunny.

One way to help a long haired rabbit during summer (and throughout the rest of the year) is to give your bunny a nice big haircut!

Grooming rabbits is not something that can easily be done at home unless you are trained and have the right equipment. Removing long, matted fur from a long haired bunny can take many hours of painstaking clipping by an experienced groomer. It is not advisable to trim a rabbit's fur with scissors as there will be a very high chance of accidentally nicking the skin and causing a serious injury.

# Opening Hours

Monday - Wednesday: 9am- 5pm  
Thursday: 9am - 8pm  
Friday: 9am - 5pm  
Saturday: 9am - 3pm

Phone: (03) 9758 9879  
Fax: (03) 7958 1193

## WHEN YOUR BUNNY OR GUINEA PIG COMES HOME AFTER SURGERY

The most important time for recovery after a rabbit or guinea pig has had surgery is the first few days at home. To ensure that your rabbit or guinea pig has the best chance of a full recovery, here are a few recommendations to do at home before your bunny comes home from hospital:

### INDOOR HOUSING

Arrange to house your pet inside for 5-7 days after surgery (or longer depending on recovery). This should be in a small area about the size of a shower base. There should be no jumps or ramps that may encourage excessive activity (ensuring they are not able to jump is the most important part of cage rest)



### STAY AT HOME

Plan to stay home with your pet the night after surgery and the following day. Close monitoring and early intervention can mean the difference between a quick recovery or the chance of secondary complications. If you are unable to spend this time with your bunny or guinea pig, it may be wise to arrange a day stay for the following day at your vet clinic.

### WARMTH

Make sure that your rabbit or guinea pig stays warm. Small animals lose heat very quickly so make sure that you have a warm fleecy, thick towel or fluffy bed that your bunny can sit on once home. House your bunny or guinea pig in a room of the house that will not be too cold overnight and remains draught free. Make sure that any bedding or hay trays are changed daily to keep your pet warm and dry. Keeping the litter tray and bedding clean will also avoid any contamination of the surgery site and changing the tray daily means that you can also closely monitor toileting habits

### EATING

Monitor your pet's eating habits once home. If your rabbit or guinea pig is not eating once home, you may have to supplement feed with critical care. Critical Care is a powdered form of food that is mixed with water and gently syringe fed to the patient. Guinea pigs do love their food so tend to eat quickly after surgery but bunnies can sometimes take a little bit more time. Rabbits may not like to eat their normal food at home post surgery and may prefer simple foods such as grass or carrot tops. It is always good to wash the vegies prior to giving it to your pet so that they will consume liquids which will help to keep them hydrated. Sometimes you may need to encourage your pet to start eating greens by waving it in front of their mouths to persuade them to eat on their own.



### PAIN RELIEF

Pain relief is a very important part of recovery after surgery. If untreated, pain can cause a rabbit or guinea pig to stop eating and develop life threatening conditions. In most cases, pain relief is required 2-5 days after surgery.

### POST SURGERY CHECK

A post surgery check is recommended within 2-4 days after surgery. This post op check is an important part of recovery for a rabbit or guinea pig. In this time, the wound can be assessed and monitored and, if required, extra pain relief can be provided.

