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Fly Strike

Fly strike can be a life threatening condition.

It occurs when Blow flies, e.g greenbottles and bluebottles lay clutches of eggs in heavily soiled fur. This occurs especially in rabbits that are fat, ill or old as they are unable to reach their hind quarters to clean, or if they have loose droppings on fresh summer grass.

The eggs that have been laid on the rabbit hatch within hours, releasing hundreds of tiny maggots. These tiny maggots burrow into the depths of the coat and begin to feed on the rabbit's skin and tissue.

Signs of Fly Strike are a strong, unpleasant smell from the hutch and rabbit. Areas commonly affected by Fly Strike are the folds of skin either side of the rectum and above the tail base, where the tail curls upwards.

The wound caused by the maggots look like superficial burns. The exposed skin looks clean and moist but the edges are soiled with a discharge, which easily mats the fur. It is here where the maggots are most often found.

Carefully check these areas daily in the summer.

If you find Fly Strike on your rabbit contact the veterinary surgery urgently.

Daily cleaning of the hutch, especially in the warmer months can help prevent Fly Strike. The use of a litter tray is also suggested.

Keep a check of your rabbits droppings, loose faeces can stick to the fur easily and start the cycle.