



# RABBITS & RHDV2

## - WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW -

Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Virus Type-2 (RHDV2) is a highly contagious and deadly disease caused by a calicivirus that affects both wild and domestic rabbits. It's not contagious to people or other animals. It causes deaths in wild rabbits and hares native to North America and has been spreading throughout the United States, Mexico, and Canada since March 2020.

The virus is shed in urine, feces, and secretions from eyes, nose, and mouth, and remains present in fur and internal organs and tissues for long periods of time. The virus infects rabbits through the mucous membranes of their eyes, noses, and mouths. Infected rabbits and insects typically transmit the virus. While RHDV2 only affects rabbits, the disease can be transmitted by people or animals through contact with contaminated objects, animals, insects, or feces. **Even if your rabbit is kept inside, they are still at risk of becoming infected with RHDV2.**

The virus causes death within 3-5 days of exposure, often with no symptoms. A sudden rabbit death is suspicious and should be reported to your local and/or state veterinarian as a possible RHDV2 case. Report sightings of infected and/or dead wild rabbits to your state's wildlife officials; **do not touch them.**

## PROTECTING YOUR RABBIT FROM RHDV2

- ▶ Get your rabbit vaccinated, where available. Vaccinating your rabbit is the most important thing you can do to protect your rabbit from the virus. (see reverse)
- ▶ Wash your hands thoroughly before and after handling rabbits.
- ▶ After contact with other rabbits, change your clothes and wash them.
- ▶ Leave shoes outside your home.
- ▶ Keep your rabbit indoors, with no outdoor playtime and no playtime with other rabbits from outside your home, unless they're vaccinated.
- ▶ Keep mosquitos and flies out of your home with window and door screens.
- ▶ Know your sources of hay, feed, and greens, and avoid if located in areas where RHDV2 is spreading among wild rabbits who may be carrying the virus.
- ▶ Quarantine any new rabbit for at least 14 days.
- ▶ Multi-pet households should take additional precautions to protect their rabbit, as the virus can be spread to a healthy, indoor-only rabbit by cats and dogs who go outside. (see reverse)
- ▶ Disinfect objects that may be contaminated. Visit [rabbit.org/rhdv](http://rabbit.org/rhdv) for a list of disinfectants that are effective against the virus.
- ▶ Use a monthly flea treatment for rabbits, cats, and dogs. Advantage II and Revolution are safe to use on rabbits. Never use Frontline. Visit [rabbit.org/faq-grooming](http://rabbit.org/faq-grooming) to learn more.



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# GETTING YOUR RABBIT VACCINATED

Regular vaccination is required for continuous protection against RHDV2. Vaccination is low risk and is effective for the vast majority of rabbits. A small number of rabbits may become infected with the virus without showing symptoms at all; this is called an "asymptomatic infection." Another very small group of vaccinated rabbits may develop mild symptoms and recover. This means biosecurity measures should still be implemented depending on your region and vaccination status of your rabbits.

Currently, a vaccine that protects against RHDV2 is available in most states in the United States. Medgene Labs manufactures this vaccine and supplies veterinarians in states where the vaccine has been approved for distribution. The vaccine has been given emergency use authorization and needs to be given annually in order to maintain protection against the virus, with a 30-day booster when administered the first time. Contact your veterinarian about the vaccine's availability and visit [rabbit.org/faq-for-medgenes-rhdv2-vaccine](https://rabbit.org/faq-for-medgenes-rhdv2-vaccine) for more information.

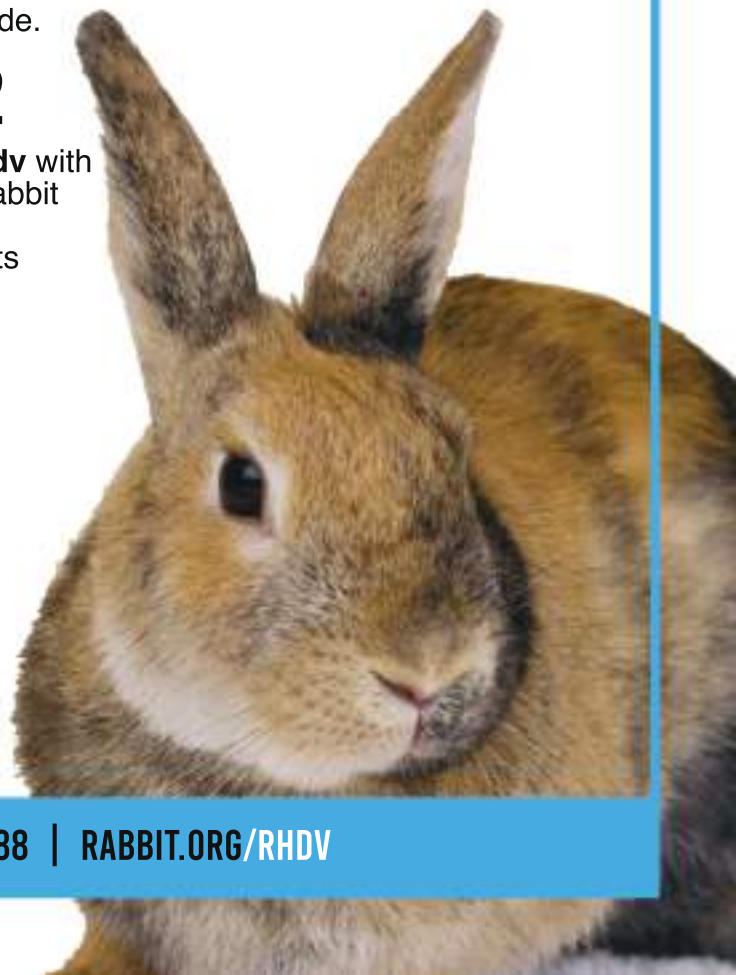
## MULTI-PET HOUSEHOLDS

Those who live with non-rabbit companion animals may need to take additional biosecurity measures to protect their rabbits from RHDV2, as pets who roam outdoors and are then allowed inside may transmit the virus to your companion rabbit.

We recommend using a monthly flea treatment for rabbits, cats, and dogs, especially in regions where RHDV2 affects wild and feral rabbits. Advantage II and Revolution flea and tick treatments are safe for use in rabbits. **Never use Frontline on a rabbit.** Keep all household pets away from all wild, feral, and unfamiliar rabbits — for example, do not feed cats or dogs rabbit meat — the meat could harbor RHDV2 and could be spread to your rabbit when your cat or dog licks your rabbit or drinks from their water bowl. We recommend keeping cats and dogs indoors whenever possible to reduce the risk that they could bring RHDV2 into your home. Leashing dogs during walks can also reduce the risk that the dog comes into contact with wild or feral rabbits. You might also consider washing your dog's feet or training them to wear booties outdoors. Keeping your rabbit's play and living spaces separate from your dogs and/or cats may also reduce the chance the rabbit comes into contact with virus tracked into your house from outside.

## LEARN MORE ABOUT RHDV2

House Rabbit Society continually updates [rabbit.org/rhdv](https://rabbit.org/rhdv) with the best information about RHDV2 and protecting your rabbit from this deadly disease. Subscribe to our newsletter at [rabbit.org/signup](https://rabbit.org/signup) to ensure that you receive timely alerts about RHDV2.



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