

# RABBIT HEMORRHAGIC DISEASE VIRUS (RHDV2)

The Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Virus (RHDV2) is a highly contagious and deadly calicivirus that has recently spread throughout Europe and North America and can infect pikas, hares, wild rabbits, and domesticated rabbits.

## TRANSMISSION

The RHDV2 virus is very hearty and can survive in the body fluids (saliva, blood, or urine) of an infected animal as well as any food, water, or other surfaces that have come in contact with the fluids. Since it can survive extreme temperatures, it can live outside a host for long periods, allowing it to easily sneak inside homes on shoes, clothing, or even skin, and infect domesticated rabbits. While humans are not affected by the virus, we can easily spread it via accidental contamination.

## SYMPTOMS

RHDV2 is a rapidly-progressing disease that causes severe bleeding in a rabbit's internal organs and tissues. Symptoms include:

- high fever above 103 F
- lethargy
- spasms or seizures
- yellowing of the eyes and skin
- bleeding from the nose, mouth, or rectum
- trouble breathing
- death

Sometimes the disease may even progress so rapidly that a rabbit may pass away suddenly before any symptoms present themselves.



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## DIAGNOSIS / TREATMENT

If you notice any possible symptoms of RHDV2 contact your veterinarian immediately. Currently, there is no known cure for the virus, but IV fluids, hand feeding, and other supportive care can be provided to make them more comfortable. Any rabbit that might be infected should immediately be quarantined to prevent the spread of the virus. Any sudden deaths should be reported to your veterinarian.

## PREVENTION

The best way to protect your rabbit and prevent the spread of RHDV2 is to vaccinate against it. As of October 2021, the Minnesota Board of Animal Health has authorized a vaccine that all domestic rabbits should get **annually**. Contact your veterinarian to get your rabbit scheduled for a vaccination today.

Additionally, make sure to practice good biosecurity and cleaning habits to limit your pets' possible exposure to the virus. Keep your rabbit away from other rabbits that may not be vaccinated against RHDV2, change your clothes and wash your hands after spending time outdoors, adopt a “no shoes in the house” policy, and ensure any dogs or cats you care for have flea prevention.

For more information, check out our website at [mnpocketpetrescue.org/rhdv](http://mnpocketpetrescue.org/rhdv).



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