



Fly Strike

Fly strike (Myiasis) is a major welfare problem that occurs mainly during warm weather.

It can affect rabbits, guinea pigs, cats and dogs as well as farm animals.

It can occur at any time of the year, but in the UK animals are particularly at risk between April and October when the weather is warmer.

Fly strike occurs when certain species of fly lay their eggs on another animal. These eggs hatch into maggots that then begin to eat the animal's flesh. Flies are attracted by the soiled or wet fur/fleece, often around the animals rear end. However, any area of the body can be affected, as can any wound, cut or scratch.

Even clean, well-kept animals can get fly-strike. It only takes one fly, and one area of soiled fur, fleece or damaged skin.

Flies are attracted to rabbits when the living conditions and hygiene are poor, e.g. dirty hutches. It is very important to keep the living area clean and disinfected, and to regularly remove waste and soiled bedding, at least once daily. Even rabbits kept in clean conditions may develop soiled hindquarters and attract flies.

Fly strike can also occur in elderly animals who are unable to clean themselves properly, possibly because of arthritis. Rabbits who have dental problems can also have problems cleaning themselves properly, so it's important to ensure that they have regular dental checks with us.

The damage caused by this horrible condition is entirely preventable. A 10 week course of Rearguard, (an insect growth regulator which prevents the maggots developing to the stage that causes damage), provides the protection your rabbit needs, along with good management of their living quarters.

A typical operation to try to repair the damage caused by Fly Strike can cost in excess of £200, which does not include post-operative care. Unfortunately, in severe cases euthanasia may be the only option.

Please talk to us about how to prevent this condition.

If you see any maggots, or fly eggs on your pet please contact the surgery immediately on 01942 677979.

Here at My Pets Vets we offer a discount scheme which allows you to spread the cost of your pet's preventable health care across the year – whilst saving a considerable sum of money each year. Just ask any member of our clinical team for more information on our Practice Care Plan.