

## **Rabbit common problems**

**Overgrown nails:** A common problem, especially with house rabbits that spend most of their time on carpets. These are easily clipped back although care must be taken not to cut too much away or the nail may bleed.

**Fly strike:** Faeces matting around the rabbit's anus and genitalia are seen more often in outdoor hutched rabbits. This can pose a serious and life threatening problem if flies lay their eggs in the wet fur and skin folds since maggot strike will quickly ensue.

The best advice is to visually check under your rabbit's tail once a day for any evidence of faecal soiling, especially in the summer weather. If you are suspicious of maggots being present then seek immediate veterinary attention.

**Poor or inadequate diet:** Feeding rabbits an incorrect diet often leads to abnormal development, especially of the teeth, with potentially disastrous results. A lot of work has been done in this field recently and our advice would be to feed a controlled amount of complete pelleted food plus ad lib hay and selected vegetables. Rabbits in the wild will often graze on grass for up to 8 hours a day and this is what keeps their teeth worn to a normal level. If we feed our pet bunnies only pelleted feeds then they satisfy their energy requirements very quickly without the need to eat their hay and veggies resulting in overgrowth of their molar teeth.

**Overgrown teeth:** Rabbits teeth grow continuously throughout life and so any abnormal wear can lead to overgrowth. As a result it is very important to check your rabbit's teeth regularly and to seek veterinary attention if you are in any doubt. Remember the most common reason for your rabbit not to eat is dental problems.

For more information please contact the surgery or have a look at the Rabbit Welfare Association web site at [www.houserabbit.co.uk](http://www.houserabbit.co.uk)