

What should I do if I suspect a possible RHD2 outbreak?

1. If you find that a rabbit has died unexpectedly you might immediately be concerned that it possibly had RHD2. Transfer the rabbit straight from hutch to a bag and seal. Cover with a second bag and seal. Keep in a cool place but do not freeze. Clean hutch out, again double bag waste. Spray with disinfectant. Now wash hands well, change clothing and shoes before tending to other rabbits. If you have more than one shed and other members of family it would make sense for someone else to feed rabbits in unaffected sheds.
2. If you have a number of rabbits it is unlikely that you have RHD if only one animal dies in the first 5 days.
3. Who should I speak to? Firstly contact your vet practice if registered. If no registered practice your choices are: any local practice or APHLA (DEFRA that was). A post mortem is required which may not confirm diagnosis of RHD but would rule other causes out. Always request a fixed price before agreeing to a post mortem being undertaken. If the priority is purely to rule out RHD and costs are an issue ask for a price to open rabbit, obtain sample of liver and send to laboratory only. Confirmation is only possible from specific testing. A sample of liver contained in viral transport medium or a frozen sample is required. Please note samples should NOT be sent in formalin. Samples to: PALS or BATT Laboratories
4. **WARNING:** Many rabbits dying of RHD2 do not have any evidence visible to the naked eye. There may be no sign of haemorrhage in the liver, spleen or lungs. This alone will not rule out RHD. In a PM undertaken at Langford in April 2016, there was no sign of any bleeding at all, liver abnormalities were seen only under a microscope. The pathologist had seen nothing like it before. Lab tests confirmed RHD 2. Two pet rabbits had died within 12 hours.
5. Inform the British Rabbit Council even if you do not have lab confirmation. The office staff will send out a questionnaire to be completed. It is understood that some exhibitors will choose not to have tests done, even with financial help. We will however expect you to abide by the following rules.
6. **Do not** attend any shows with or without stock following an unexpected death or go anywhere where you would meet other exhibitors. **Do not** buy or sell stock. **Do not** allow anyone who has or comes into contact with rabbits to visit your home.
7. Ideally all dead stock to be incinerated.
8. A member of the Governing Body will contact you to offer support.