

Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease

Rabbit hemorrhagic disease virus, serotype 2 (RHDV2) is highly contagious and often fatal for domestic and wild rabbits. It has been found in rabbits in several states, including New Jersey in the spring of 2022.



RHDV2 cannot be transmitted from rabbits to humans or other animals.

Clinical signs associated with RHDV2 can include fever, bloody nasal discharge, hemorrhages, seizures, other neurological signs, difficulty breathing, inappetence, and lethargy. RHDV2 can cause acute death. A strain of RHDV2 first emerged in Europe in 2010.

Vaccine available

In the fall of 2021, the United States Department of Agriculture, Center for Veterinary Biologics granted an Emergency Use Authorization of an experimental vaccine to protect against RHDV2. The vaccine is an inactivated recombinant vaccine given as a two-dose series, 21 days apart. The vaccine is available to New Jersey licensed veterinarians for in-state administration to domestic rabbits. Pet rabbit owners are encouraged to speak with their licensed veterinarian regarding RHDV2 vaccination.

The RHDV2 vaccine is manufactured by Medgene Labs of Brookings, S.D.

Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease is a reportable disease. All veterinarians and rabbit owners are encouraged to be on alert for RHDV2 and continue practicing good biosecurity to prevent its spread.

Contact information

Any veterinarian or other person who suspects existence of the disease should notify the NJDA, Division of Animal Health at 609-671-6400. The New Jersey Animal Health Diagnostic Laboratory (NJAHDL) is available to assist with RHDV diagnosis and can be reached at 609-406-6999 or via email at jerseyvetlab@ag.nj.gov. Learn more about the NJAHDL at www.jerseyvetlab.nj.gov.

For information about Medgene Labs and the vaccine, call 605-697-2600 or visit <https://medgenelabs.com/rhdv2/>.

For more information about Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease, visit: https://www.aphis.usda.gov/publications/animal_health/fs-rhdv2.pdf