

Guidelines for Cleaning and Disinfecting Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Viruses (RHDV)

Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Viruses (RHDV) are hardy, stable viruses, and can survive more than three months in the environment. This disease can be spread by direct contact with a sick rabbit or contaminated objects. Insects like flies and fleas, birds, and other animals (including people) can carry the virus on their bodies and infect rabbits. Proper cleaning and disinfection are critical to stopping the spread of RHDV.

Disinfecting Agents

The following table shows three common agents that are effective against RHDV:

Disinfecting Agent	Dilution	Contact time and Product Removal	Additional Considerations
Household Bleach (6% or 8.25%)	1 part bleach to 9 parts water ½ cup bleach in 1 gallon water	5 minutes Rinse off with water and allow to air dry.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixture only good for 24 hours. • Use in well ventilated area. • Wear gloves and protective clothing.
Potassium peroxymonosulfates (Virkon™)	Follow package directions for 1% solution.	10 minutes Allow to airdry.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rinse food and water dishes before using. • Use in well ventilated area. • Wear gloves and eye/face protection.
Accelerated hydrogen peroxides (Rescue™, Intervention™)	Concentrated product: 8 oz. per 1 gallon water or 2 oz. per 1 quart water	5 minutes Wipe off and let air dry.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ready to use product also available (does not require dilution). • Wear gloves.

Two Steps to Eliminate RHDV: Cleaning and Disinfection

Cleaning:

- All feces, soiled bedding, and other organic matter needs to be removed prior to use of a disinfecting solution.
- Double bag in plastic and place in garbage or bury in the ground at a depth adequate to prevent scavenging by other animals.
- Wash surfaces of enclosures, cages, and coops, and bowls and other equipment with soap and water until visibly clean and allow to dry.

Disinfection:

- Use disinfecting solution made to proper dilution.
- Submerge items in the solution or saturate all surfaces of larger items for appropriate contact time based on product used.
 - NOTE: Items must remain wet during the entire contact time to kill RHDV. Keep submerged items below the surface and reapply solution to surfaces of larger items as needed.
- Remove disinfecting solution according to product used

Notes:

- Wood and fabric items that cannot easily be cleaned and disinfected should be discarded by burning or double bagging in plastic and placing in garbage.
- Contaminated soil or other ground cover under outdoor hutches should be removed down to a level of no visible contamination and deeply buried.
- Rabbit carcasses should be burned, buried in the ground at a depth adequate to prevent scavenging by other animals, or double bagged in plastic and discarded according to local waste management regulations.
- Do not allow people or animals in area of cleaning and disinfection until process is complete.
- Use dedicated clothing and footwear while cleaning and disinfecting and change before caring for other animals or moving to other locations.
- Regularly wash hands with soap and water.
- Consider bathing other animals that may have contacted contaminated items or sick rabbits to remove virus particles from feet and coat.
- A 90-day quarantine/fallow period is required after a case of RHDV2 in a herd. No new rabbits may be brought to the location and surviving rabbits are not allowed to move from the location during this time.

The Board of Animal Health is an Equal Opportunity Employer