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### DENTAL PROCEDURES

Whilst we normally prefer to be able to inform you precisely of the intended procedure prior to any surgery, we are unable to do so with rabbits that require dental work. This is simply because rabbit's teeth cannot be viewed properly, even with an auroscope, unless they are sedated or anaesthetised.

X rays may often be required to assess tooth root length and inflammation and the presence of sharp spurs on teeth.

The most common causes of dental disease in rabbits are:

- Congenital deformity (especially dwarf breeds).
- Dietary irregularities (muesli type feed leading to selective feeding, calcium deficiency and lack of fibrous material).
- Tooth trauma.
- Tooth root and/or jaw infections.

Changes in diet are often required after dental disease to prevent rapid recurrence but some problems, especially those involving the molar teeth, can be impossible to 'cure'.

### NEUTERING RABBITS

#### Females:

By 5 years of age, 50-95% of rabbits are likely to develop cancer of the womb. Uterine infections (pyometra) are common in rabbits over 7 years of age.

Spaying removes all the behavioural problems associated with sexual maturity, such as nesting, mounting, aggression, spraying and mood swings. Neutered rabbits are also easier to toilet train and live more peaceably in the company of males.

Females are generally spayed at around 6 months of age but note that those kept in the company of males can be sexually mature (and therefore pregnant!) as young as 16 weeks.

#### Males:

Castration eliminates the behavioural changes associated with sexual maturity, principally mounting, spraying and aggression. Neutered males are easier to litter train, keep with females and smell rather less!

Castration is best performed around the time of sexual maturity at 3-4 months old. (Both testicles must be present.) Remember rabbits can still be fertile for up to 8 weeks after surgery.