Efficacy

The efficacy of fenbendazole for preventing and treating experimental infection of Encephalitozoon cuniculi has been investigated.²

Rabbits were infected with E. cuniculi during a 9 day treatment period with fenbendazole.

Fenbendazole is effective for E. cuniculi prevention in rabbits.

The same trial demonstrated that 28 days of fenbendazole is effective in eliminating infection in clinical cases.

Safety

Fenbendazole is a broad spectrum anthelmintic with an established safety record in a wide range of species. In a 66 rabbit trial, no clinical, biochemical or haematological abnormalities were seen at 3 times the recommended dose for 30 days.⁴

Panacur Rabbit has an excellent safety profile in rabbits.

Panacur Rabbit - dosage and administration

- Well accepted by rabbits

Prophylactic regime:
- 1 syringe graduation per 2.5kg daily for 9 consecutive days (20 mg/kg).
- Routine dosing 2-4 times yearly.
- Also high risk periods:
  - when the rabbit is acquired
  - prior to mixing with other rabbits
  - prior to mating
- 1 tube contains 18 graduations in total

Use Panacur Rabbit 2-4 times yearly to help prevent E. cuniculi.
Rabbits

Rabbits are now the third most common pet in the UK and are continuing to increase in popularity. Research has shown that approximately 50% of domestic rabbits have been exposed to the parasite *E. cuniculi*. Historically, prophylaxis was not available to aid the control of this sometimes fatal disease. But the launch of Panacur Rabbit changed this.

**Transmission and lifecycle**

*E. cuniculi* is widespread in pet rabbits although not all show symptoms. Clinical signs can include:

- Head tilt
- Urinary incontinence
- Renal failure
- Hindlimb weakness
- Cataract formation
- Convulsions
- Uveitis

Clinical signs

*E. cuniculi* is widespread in pet rabbits although not all show symptoms. Clinical signs can include:

- Head tilt
- Hindlimb weakness
- Cataract formation
- Urethritis
- Renal failure

Diagnosis

- Histopathology of nervous tissue or kidney is the only method of definitive diagnosis.
- Serology, while useful, will not distinguish early infection from long-term or chronic infections. Paired samples may be required.

Prevalence of *E. cuniculi*

A 2006 UK serological study suggested that over 50% of apparently healthy pet rabbits have been exposed to *E. cuniculi*.

Awareness amongst vets

A study at Edinburgh University in 2000 found that:

- Screening for this parasite was not routine in veterinary practice, due to cost.
- 30% of vets questioned at this time were not aware of the disease in pet rabbits.
- Due to increased understanding of this disease, awareness and management is now improving.

Panacur Rabbit - prevention

Panacur Rabbit is available to help prevent *E. cuniculi* and should become part of every rabbit’s preventative healthcare regime in the fight against this deadly disease. However, owners should also be encouraged to observe further management practices to help control *E. cuniculi* e.g. raised food and water access to reduce the risk of urine contamination.