

capsules

THE CURRENT LITERATURE IN BRIEF

Uroliths in Rabbits

Rabbits eat foods that are high in calcium. Because of their unique calcium metabolism and the alkaline pH of their urine, they often produce a dense, yellowish-white urine that contains calcium carbonate precipitate. Sometimes rabbits have urine that is suspected to be bloody, but a uniform reddish-to-brown color may result from pigments from ingested vegetables. Cystic calculi are common and usually comprise calcium salts (carbonate, oxalate, or phosphate). The calculi are most commonly single, filling the entire bladder. The rabbits are usually still able to urinate but are presented for a history of pain or urine scalding. Obstructions are rare. The risk for hypercalciuria leading to stone formation can be reduced by fluid administration, periodic expression of the urinary bladder, bladder flushing under anesthesia, and reduction of calcium in the diet. Stones may need to be removed surgically. The prognosis is usually good, with a dramatic improvement seen within the first few days after surgery. Stones may also form in the urethra and are usually easily removed; however, stones in the renal pelvis have a much graver prognosis.

COMMENTARY: Although uroliths of calcium salts are most common in rabbits, these animals can also form struvite stones, especially if they have urinary tract infections. Treating such infections reduces the risk for stone recurrence. If the stones are made of calcium, encouraging water consumption and exercise and decreasing consumption of alfalfa hay may reduce their risk. — *The Editors*

Diagnosis and treatment of urolithiasis in pet rabbits. Capello V. EXOTIC DVM 6:15-22, 2004