



## Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Overview

Rabbit hemorrhagic disease is a highly contagious, fatal disease in rabbits and is currently classified as a reportable, foreign animal disease in the United States. Animal health officials detected rabbit hemorrhagic disease virus serotype 2 (RHDV2) for the third time in the United States in February 2020. It has since been spreading to multiple states across the Southwest. It is important to note that RHDV2 does not impact human health.

RHDV2, unlike other rabbit hemorrhagic disease viruses, affects both domestic and wild rabbits. Infected rabbits may develop a fever, be hesitant to eat, or show respiratory or nervous signs. However, many times, the only signs of the disease are sudden death.

### How RHDV2 Spreads

RHDV2 can be spread through direct contact or exposure to an infected rabbit's excretions or blood. The virus can also survive and be spread from carcasses, food, water, and any contaminated materials. It has also been spread by insects. Because of survivability, people can spread the virus indirectly by carrying it on their clothing and shoes after being exposed to an infected animal or environment. Thorough biosecurity and vaccination are the only way to protect your rabbits.

### Learn More At:

[www.medgeneLabs.com/RHDV2](http://www.medgeneLabs.com/RHDV2)

#### \*Source

fs-rhdv2.pdf (usda.gov)

[www.medgenelabs.com](http://www.medgenelabs.com)

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# Frequently Asked Questions

## **Is there a Vaccine for RHDV2?**

A. Yes, Medgene Labs of Brookings, SD has developed a new vaccine and gained emergency use authorization by the USDA after review of current safety and challenge information.

## **What kind of vaccine is the Medgene Labs vaccine?**

A. Medgene Labs vaccine is an inactivated (killed) recombinant subunit vaccine that builds immunity to RHDV-2 specific antigenic proteins in the rabbit. The immune system sees the RHDV-2 protein and learns to protect the rabbit from the virus.

The vaccine is administered through a subcutaneous injection and is comprised of a 2-dose regimen, with the second (booster) dose being delivered 21 days following the initial dose.

## **How effective is the vaccine in preventing RHDV-2?**

A. The vaccine has been shown to be highly effective in preventing death in a CVB-approved efficacy challenge study conducted at university facilities. During development 100% of rabbits fully vaccinated survived when challenged directly with RHDV-2 live virus.

## **Will my rabbit possibly infect other rabbits after being vaccinated?**

A. No. This vaccine only uses parts (proteins) of RHDV-2 to build immunity. It is impossible for a rabbit that receives this vaccine to shed any virus as it doesn't contain the full RHDV-2 virus.

## **How long does it take for the vaccine to be effective?**

A. The vaccine should be fully protective 14 days after the second vaccine booster, which would be 35 days after the first dose.

## **How effective is a single dose of the vaccine?**

A. Due to the urgent need of a US RHDV-2 vaccine, Medgene has focused on producing the most protective and safest vaccine possible; at this time that requires a two-dose series 21 days apart.

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## What side effects should I expect?

A. Rabbits may develop a small swelling at the site of the injection, develop a slight temporary fever, or be lethargic for a day or two.

## How young can I administer the vaccine?

A. This vaccine has demonstrated safety when given at 4 weeks of age.

## Is it safe for pregnant and nursing does?

A. A full study on the safety in nursing and pregnant does has not yet been completed.

## Is it safe for previously vaccinated rabbits to be vaccinated with the new vaccine? Will they need the initial booster series?

A. This vaccine has gone through safety testing in accordance with USDA standards. It has been determined to be safe and approved for use with a two-dose regimen.

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