

## Silly Rabbit, Don't Eat The Rat Bait; And A Ferret's Red Third Eyelids

**Treating a rabbit that ate rat poison and discovering the reason behind a ferret having red third eyelids.**

*By Jerry Murray, DVM*

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Photo Courtesy Jerry Murray, DVM

This ferret's red, protruding third eyelids were not caused by cherry eye.

It is common for dogs and cats to ingest toxic products such as insecticides, household cleaners, garden products, human or veterinary medications, and rodenticides. Small mammals can also ingest the same toxic stuff and poison themselves. Recently, I treated a rabbit that had eaten all of a rat bait (rat poison).

Fortunately the owner heard the bunny chewing on something and was able to see it swallow the rodenticide. The owner was rightfully scared that the rat poison would harm her rabbit. Rat poison works by interfering with the vitamin K dependent clotting factors. This causes the animal to lose the ability to form normal blood clots. Without normal blood clots, the animal eventually bleeds to death.

The bunny had ingested enough of the rat poison to be toxic and likely fatal without treatment. Treatment is to give vitamin K1 to counteract the effects of the rat poison. This is best done by giving vitamin K1 orally. Medicating a rabbit with a tablet or a capsule can be quite the challenge, so the injectable vitamin K1 was used orally to treat this patient. Surprisingly, the injectable vitamin K1 did not taste bad, and the owner was able to medicate the rabbit successfully.

Another interesting case was a ferret with an eye problem. His third eyelids were red and enlarged. This resembled "cherry eyes" that I commonly see in dogs. "Cherry eyes" is merely the prolapse of the third eyelids, but it was obvious that this ferret did not have "cherry eyes." The rest of the physical exam was basically normal, and there was no damage to the eye itself.

The next step was to schedule him for surgery to remove the third eyelids and let a pathologist take a look at them. The surgery went just fine; however, the pathologist diagnosed lymphoma throughout the samples. It is common to have lymphoma behind the eye that actually pushes the eye forward and makes the eye bulge (retroorbital), but this is the first case where I have seen lymphoma in the third eyelids.

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