

Dose regime for commonly used drugs in rabbits



Others

Gabapentin: 3-10 mg/kg q8-12h po

Tramadol: 4.4-11 mg/kg q12h po

Antibiotics

(this is not a complete list!):

Amoxicillin: 7-15mg/kg q24-48h (parenterally ONLY) sc

Azithromycin: 15-30 mg/kg po q24

Doxycycline: 2.5 mg/kg q12h po

Enrofloxacin: 5-20 mg/kg q12-24h (20 mg/kg q24h preferable) sc po

Marbofloxacin: 2-10 mg/kg sc po q24h

Metronidazole: 20-40 mg/kg sc po q12h

Oxytetracycline: 30 mg/kg sc q72 or 15 mg/kg sc q24h

Penicillin G: 40,000 iu/kg q7d sc x3 doses for Treponema

TMPS: 20-30 mg/kg q12h po

If in doubt, remember the relatively safe “Medications For Treating Small Mammals” are Metronidazole, Fluroquinolones (except pradofloxacin), Tetracyclines, potentiated Sulphonamides, Macrolides (except erythromycin).

Anti-inflammatories

The most commonly used class of anti-inflammatories used in rabbits are the NSAIDs. Steroids are very rarely indicated for rabbits and generally only used parenterally for immune suppression and acute anaphylaxis. Topical use is rare compared to that in dogs. They may be more widely used by inhaled routes by nebulisation.

NSAIDS

Carprofen: this may still be used in practice, but has been largely superseded by meloxicam as it is relatively difficult to titrate the oral dose appropriately for rabbits. Doses are typically: 2-5mg/kg/day in 1 or 2 doses by all routes.

Meloxicam: this is near universally used due to there being both an injectable, and an oral formulation, especially as the oral form is a liquid, with good palatability and 2 concentrations, allowing titration of doses to effect for the patient. Doses have increased in recent years following more observational and laboratory studies, and are typically: 0.6mg/kg q12-24h by all routes with a maximum dose of 1.5mg/kg/day suggested.

Other, more selective COX-2 inhibitors have not been widely used in rabbits due to the ease and flexibility of meloxicam use, but cautious evaluation of these may be appropriate in individuals not responding well to meloxicam nor carprofen.

Opioids

A number of opioids may be used in rabbits, but in practice, buprenorphine, butorphanol (mu receptor partial agonists) and methadone (pure agonist) are most commonly used. Whilst this class of drug does slow GI motility, this is insignificant in most cases, and far outweighs the benefits of effective analgesia.

Buprenorphine: 0.03-0.1 mg/kg IV/IM to IV/IM/transmucosally q6-12 hours (note 40 minute time to take effect, regardless of route)

Butorphanol: 0.1-0.5mg/kg IV/IM q2-4 hours

Methadone: 0.3-0.7mg/kg IV/IM q2-4 hours, ideally dependent on pain scoring

References and further reading:

Hedley, Joanna (2018) Antibiotic usage in rabbits and rodents

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Kirchgessner, Megan S. (2006) Therapeutic Review: Meloxicam Journal of Exotic Pet Medicine, Vol 15, No 4 (October), 2006: pp 281-283

Meredith A (2015) Ed Small Animal Formulary. Part B: Exotic Pets. 9th edn. BSAVA, Quedgeley, Gloucester, UK.

Note that few of the above products are licenced for rabbits. Under the Cascade, where possible (ie safe, available, effective in the conditions being treated, and possible to administer effectively to the animal in question) a licenced drug should be used. Where such a product is not available, a product licenced for another species or a different condition in that species, may be used. If none of the above are available, a product licenced for human use or imported from the EU may be used. If all of the above is not possible, an extemporaneous product may be put together. Note that some antibiotics are licenced, but are of global concern regarding human and animal antimicrobial resistance, and this is a legitimate factor in antibiotic selection.

