



# **NSW CAVY CLUB Inc.**

## **PARASITE CONTROL**

One of the most common problems that affect cavies are skin problems. The first signs are that the cavy has begun scratching or losing hair, often with scabs or sores on the skin. The most common causes are fungal infections or parasites.

### **PARASITES.**

Cavies can suffer from lice and mites in their hair and intestinal worms, but rarely from fleas. They have been known to get ticks.

**Running Lice-** these are rice grain shaped and about the size of a pinhead. They can be seen wiggling at the base of the hair close to the body and are a creamy colour. They are commonly carried by birds and are transferred from one cavy to another. If you are bringing in cavies from another stud, check that they are free from lice before adding them to your existing stock. They appear to be itchy and the cavy will scratch a lot, particularly around the neck and ears and the middle of the back.

**Static Lice (or hay mite)-** these look like dust on the end of the hairs on the cavy. They vary from cream to chocolate in colour and they don't appear to move, though they do in fact spread over the cavy. There are several theories about where they come from and how they are transferred, but they are more common when you put dry or dusty hay in the cage. They do not transfer to humans and do not appear to bother the cavy. Static mite is a penalty in exhibition cavies, so treatment is necessary before showing.

**Treatment-** for both types of lice/mite, dip the cavy in an insecticidal wash such as "Malaban" or "Fido's freitch rinse". Do not use products that are only made for dogs. Use the dilution rate for kittens and follow the directions carefully, do not rinse off allow to dry on the cavy. Wrap the cavy in a towel and sit in a warm place for about 10 minutes before attempting to dry them, this allows the product to work. In cold weather dry in front of a heater or with a hairdryer.

**Don't expect static mite to disappear straight away, they stay stuck to the hair for days, even if dead. A quick wipe over with a cotton ball soaked in eucalyptus oil will usually remove them, followed by a thorough shampoo to remove the oil, blow drying also helps remove the last of them.**

**Ticks-** these are serious and you should take the cavy to the vet as soon as you see it. Don't try to remove the tick yourself unless you cannot get to see the vet immediately and if possible, take the tick with you for identification.

**Intestinal Worms-** Cavies can pick up worms from grass that has been contaminated by dogs or cats droppings, and are more common in cavies that are kept in grass run type cages for this reason. If you pick grass for them in areas that dogs or cats have access to, it may be advisable to worm them routinely as well. The most obvious symptoms of worm infestation are;- eating well but still losing weight, and a lean body with a large belly, often with a bluish tinge to the skin, the cavy may have a dull thin patchy coat.

**Treatment-**"Aristopet" make a small animal worming syrup with dose rate for cavies, available in the pet shop, some puppy and kitten wormers also have dose rates for guinea pigs.



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