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PATIENT PROFILE

Patient Name	Thumper	Owner Name	Jones	Gender	Female Entire
Species	Rabbit	Breed	Dutch	Age	2yo 3 mo

Clinical history:

3 month history of incisor malocclusion now struggling to eat. Physical examination findings: both lower incisors are abnormal with overgrowth of the right lower incisor and the left lower incisor appears necrotic.

Clinical questions to be answered:

- Should I extract the incisors?
- What further step should I take to ensure this rabbit has the best possible outcome?

Attachments:

WRITTEN SPECIALIST ADVICE

Hi! I'm **Dr Copper Aitken-Palmer**, Specialist in Zoo, Wildlife and Exotic Animal Medicine. Let me summarise the issues facing this rabbit, then advise on diagnostics and management.

Firstly, it's helpful for you to let the owner know that typically, this type of malocclusion is caused by maxillofacial trauma as a juvenile but can also be congenital in dwarf breeds. Often the incisors are not the only affected teeth. The rabbit will likely require lifelong recurrent dental trimming and veterinary attention.

The right lower incisor is growing abnormally and appears to be affecting the growth of the left lower and both upper incisors. The upper incisors are splayed laterally. When there is malocclusion affecting normal tooth growth from the gumline, the pressure on these continuously growing teeth will result in elongation of the roots (reserve crown). The abnormal roots can then cause abscessation, pain, inflammation of surrounding soft tissues, and trauma to neighbouring teeth.

Incisor extraction is not an easy procedure in rabbits. Lower incisor extraction has fewer complications than upper incisor extraction, but extraction is a last resort. This rabbit could probably be managed with routine periodic dental trimming, but she may have lifelong health challenges related to dental disease. Extensive dental disease impacts an animal's welfare and is a common reason for euthanasia among rabbits.

For this rabbit, it will be important to address the dental abnormalities in stages as below.

- 1.Ensure adequate nutrition since the rabbit is not eating well - The priority is ensuring this rabbit can consume adequate nutrition. Nutritional support should include a high-fibre slurry daily while she is not able to eat her food normally. This will also make her a better anaesthesia candidate for dental trimming and evaluation.
- 2.Address incisor malocclusion - Conduct a full dental exam and imaging under general anaesthesia. Ideally any abnormal teeth should be trimmed to allow for improved mastication. Use a dental drill while protecting neighbouring soft tissue structures. I've included annotations to your photos to help guide the trimming of the incisor.
- 3.Evaluate for and address cheek teeth malocclusion
- 4.Diagnostic imaging should also be performed to evaluate the severity of the disease and plan for long term management. Skull CT is a more powerful diagnostic tool in rabbits, but skull radiographs provide some essential information.
- 5.Plan for long term care (e.g. frequent dental trimming/adjustments or extractions).

We hope you find the summary of our advice helpful to support your management of this case. If you have any further questions or updates, contact us at [+44 \(0\) 1223 790439](tel:+44(0)1223790439), you can add these via the consult chat on the platform/app.

With kind regards,

Dr Copper Aitken-Palmer
DVM, PhD, Dipl. ACZM Specialist in Zoo, Wildlife and Exotic Animal Medicine
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