



Differential diagnosis for megacolon in rabbits also called “cow-pile syndrome”

Veterinary textbook related to internal medicine mention dysautonomia with the following terms:

- constipation,
- colonic weakness,
- neuromuscular weakness/disease,
- megacolon,

In case of traumatic origin:

- bilateral pelvic nerve damage.

If the problem becomes chronic with time, nerve damage may be ruled out and other causes should be looked for, among others:

Viral causes	Inflammation due to the presence of Cytomegaloviruses, Coronaviruses
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Bacterial causes	Lack of proper bacterial flora
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	Coccidiosis
	Giardiasis
	Presence of the flagellate <i>Trypanosoma cruzi</i> (this parasite was experimentally inoculated in rabbits and found to cause severe damage on heart and intestine, leading to megacolon),

Parasitic causes	<p>Parasitic roundworms or tapeworm. Their presence has been linked to intestinal or cecal impaction, accompanied by stasis, severe pain and gas formation, this independently from the type of worm: pinworm or tapeworm. Treatment of pinworms is done by administration of benzimidazoles, more specifically fenbendazole or thiabendazole. Piperazine is reported efficient too, while ivermectin does not affect the <i>Passalurus</i> roundworm. Treatment of tapeworm is done with praziquantel.</p>
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Genetic causes	<p>Pathophysiological and functional aspects of the megacolon-syndrome of homozygous spotted rabbits, by Bödeker et al.</p>
	Muscular disturbance of the colonic smooth muscle,
	Nerve injury or damage
	Presence of tumors, polyps

Mechanical	Stenosis
	Muscular disturbance of the colonic smooth muscle,
	Nerve injury or damage
	Presence of tumors, polyps

Neurological causes	Nerve injury or damage
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Metabolic causes	Inflammation due to the presence of Cytomegaloviruses, Coronaviruses
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Pharmacological causes	Overmedication
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Homonal causes	Hypothyroidism
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Environmental causes	Behavior
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Diagnosis tools include X-ray, barium test, ultrasound, eventually a neurological examination, serum profile probably will indicate colonic weakness in rabbits, as in other animals. If true megacolon is diagnosed, the rabbit shows a constant (and not chronic) leakage of mucus/watery stuff via the anus and hyponatremia (blood sodium level under average).

For reference blood biochemistry values in rabbits: [click here](#).



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