What if you see ...?

Analgesics must be administered as outlined in the UCUA-approved protocol. When "as needed" analgesics are specified, animals must be monitored for signs of pain, and treated accordingly.

Listed below are easily identifiable indicators of pain in rabbits. This is neither a comprehensive nor specific list, and as such, other observations should be taken into account when assessing pain status in rabbits. Please contact ULAM veterinary staff for additional assistance with identification and/or treatment of pain.

**References**


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**Appearance**

- Orbital Tightening
  - The eyelid is partially or completely closed. The globes themselves may also be drawn in toward the head so that they protrude less. If the eye closure reduces the visibility of the eye by more than half it would be scored as "pronounced".

- Cheek Flattening
  - Contraction around the muzzle so that the whisker pads are pressed against the side of the face. The side contour of the face and nose is angular and the rounded appearance of the cheeks to either side of the nose is lost.

- Nose Shape
  - The nares (nostril slits) are drawn vertically creating a more pointed nose that resembles a "V" more than a "U." The tip of the nose may also be tucked under towards the chin exaggerating this appearance.

- Whisker Position
  - Whiskers are straightened and extended horizontally or pulled back toward the cheeks instead of the normal position where whiskers tend to have a gentle downward curve.

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**Behavior**

- Appetite
  - Reduced food and/or water intake
- Activity and Posture
  - Reduced activity, or decreased interaction with environment
  - Restlessness or frequent alteration in posture
  - Hunched posture, or tensing of musculature
  - Increased or abnormal aggression
- Attention to Surgical Site
  - Scratching/licking at painful area
  - Failure to groom
- Other
  - Increased salivation
  - Teeth grinding
  - Increased respiratory rate

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