



V-gels are awesome!

I first became aware of the V-gel system at BSAVA 2012, when I got very excited about the concept of a protected airway system for rabbit anaesthesia. My boss instantly appreciated their advantages and invested in a complete set of the rabbit V-gels, which have now become the centrepiece of our standard anaesthesia protocol for rabbits at the Ambivet Exotics clinic.

For the individual rabbit, having a supra-glottal airway device allows optimum delivery of gaseous anaesthetic, as well as minimal risk of iatrogenic trauma. We also use a capnograph with every anaesthetic, which allows better monitoring and titration of oxygen requirements. For the anaesthetist, this allows a much more controlled anaesthetic, tailored to each rabbit's specific needs. And for the surgeon and any observers, the risk of anaesthetic gas escaping into the surgical suite is minimised.

At the Ambivet Exotics clinic, our standard protocol is to use a triple-combination of injectable sedatives to provide multi-modal anaesthesia and analgesia, followed by placement of the V-gel device with the capnograph attached. The V-gels are remarkably easy to place even for a trained novice, and we use them for maintaining an airway and providing oxygen support, plus inhalational isoflurane if required. We also make use of the D-grip which is invaluable for preventing circuit drag on the device; this is especially important as we routinely tilt the operating table to minimise the weight of the abdominal contents putting pressure on the diaphragm of the rabbit, as they tend to have some degree of respiratory compromise. The use of the capnograph has led to an increased awareness of the variation in oxygen demand in different patients, and our anaesthetics are therefore more predictable and therefore safer.

In a discipline where we are frequently discussing with owners the use of non-licensed medications in accordance with the prescribing cascade, as is generally the case with exotics work, my rabbit owners are generally thrilled to hear that their bunnies are receiving a standard of care which is at the forefront of veterinary medicine.

I truly believe that the V-gel system has helped us to develop big improvements in the standard of care for this area; I still get very excited that we have such advanced equipment available to us in the practice setting.

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