



VACCINATIONS FACT SHEET

Vaccinations are routinely given to horses to try and prevent the spread of a disease throughout the equine population. The vaccines are given to provide some immunity to a number of diseases that the horse may encounter.

INFLUENZA (FLU).

Equine influenza is a highly contagious disease of horses, mules, donkeys and other equidae! The virus is spread by coughing animals who release the virus into the air. It can also be spread mechanically - on clothing, brushes or other equipment that has been in contact with infected horses. The incubation period is only 1-3 days, so once the disease is introduced into a susceptible population it can spread very rapidly.

CLINICAL SIGNS

- Fever (Normal temperature is 38 degrees Celsius)
- Harsh, dry cough
- Nasal discharge
- Depression/lethargy
- Loss of appetite
- Muscle pain and/or weakness

In many horses, these signs resolve quite quickly and the horse will recover in around 2 weeks. However, some animals can take much longer (sometimes up to 6 months) to recover. There is also the possibility of secondary infections that can prolong the recovery time.

DIAGNOSIS

- Often the clinical signs are enough to make a diagnosis!
- Confirmation requires nasal swabs or paired blood samples to test for rising antibody levels.

TREATMENT

- Rest and TLC
- Non steroidal anti-inflammatories (bute or danilon) can be given to reduce the temperature and make your horse more comfortable.
- It is important to monitor your horse for signs of pneumonia.

PREVENTION

- It is important that your horse is regularly vaccinated to try and ensure they are adequately protected against flu.

VACCINATION PROTOCOL

Two doses 21-92 days apart
Third dose 150-215 days later
Annual boosters within 365 days

TETANUS

Every horse should be vaccinated against tetanus, regardless of whether they are competing or not. Tetanus is caused by a bacterium (*Clostridium tetanii*) that is found in the soil where it can survive for a long period of time. Tetanus can enter the body through any grazes, cuts or puncture wounds (including punctures to the sole of the hoof).

CLINICAL SIGNS

- The bacteria rapidly multiply and produce a toxin that causes stiffness that progresses to rigid paralysis
- The horse may adopt a rigid stance with the tail raised
- Horses become very anxious and hypersensitive to touch and sound
- The third eyelid often protrudes across the eye
- The disease will progress until the horse can no longer eat or stand.
- The muscles involved in breathing also become paralysed and the horse will die of respiratory failure

DIAGNOSIS

- Recent history of a wound, clinical signs and knowledge of a lack of vaccination against tetanus are often enough to make the diagnosis.
- Bacterial culture and/or serology can be used to support the diagnosis.

TREATMENT

- Horses are very susceptible to tetanus toxin so, even with aggressive treatment, the disease is usually fatal.
- If caught early, we can attempt to treat with high doses of antibiotics and tetanus antitoxin but prognosis is poor.
- The horse would require intensive nursing and often, despite our best efforts, euthanasia is necessary on humane grounds.

PREVENTION

- Regular vaccination is the best way to protect your horse against tetanus.

VACCINATION PROTOCOL

Two doses 4-6 weeks apart
Booster vaccination one year later
Further boosters every 2-3 years (depending on vaccine brand)

**IN GENERAL WE USE COMBINED FLU AND TETANUS VACCINATIONS.
WITH THESE COMBINED VACCINES A FLU BOOSTER IS GIVEN YEARLY
AND THE COMBINED FLU/TETANUS BOOSTER IS GIVEN EVERY OTHER
YEAR.WE CAN ALSO GIVE TETANUS ONLY VACCINES.**

EQUINE HERPES VIRUS (EHV)

This virus can cause three different disease types - abortion in pregnant mares, neurological disease and upper respiratory disease.

RESPIRATORY DISEASE - this is the most common form seen and can cause a mild fever, coughing and a nasal discharge. One infected with the virus it will remain latent in the nerve endings and can recur if the horse becomes stressed.

ABORTION - EHV causes abortion in the last 3 months of pregnancy. AN outbreak of EHV on a stud can cause a 'storm' of abortions.

NEUROLOGICAL DISEASE - this can follow the respiratory form of the disease with horses becoming weak/paralysed in their hindlimbs. Horses can recover but severely affected cases may require euthanasia. Unfortunately there is no licensed vaccine to protect against this form of the virus.

VACCINATION PROTOCOL

PREGNANT MARES - Vaccines at 5, 7 and 9 months of pregnancy

RESPIRATORY DISEASE PROTECTION - 2 doses 3-6 weeks apart
Boosters every 6 months

STRANGLES

Strangles is a highly contagious respiratory disease. Strangles causes thick nasal discharge, fever, depression, coughing, and swollen, painful and abscessed lymph nodes of the head and neck.

Please refer to our factsheet on Strangles for more information!

Vaccination to protect from Strangles is available and the vaccine is given into the upper lip. Please speak to us about this vaccine if you would like more information.

**PLEASE FEEL FREE TO SPEAK TO ANY OF THE VETS AT WENDOVER
HEIGHTS EQUINE FOR MORE INFORMATION.
01296 621840**