

Vaccine Recommendations

The following are some general recommendations on vaccination. However is important to work with your veterinarian to develop a vaccination protocol to fit your horse's individual needs.

Tetanus

Tetanus is a disease caused by the organism *Clostridium tetani*. *C. tetani* is a spore forming bacteria found in the intestinal tract of most animals including horses. It can be found in the soil everywhere and therefore the risk of exposure is high. It is not a contagious disease but is contracted most commonly from puncture wounds and lacerations.

Eastern/Western Equine Encephalomyelitis (EEE/WEE)

EEE and WEE are viral diseases which infect the brain and central nervous. Both are spread by mosquitoes and other blood sucking insects. Transmission can occur as long as mosquitoes are present but is most prevalent in the summer and early fall. Both are very serious diseases which have no cure and are prevalent in the south eastern United States.

West Nile Virus (WNV)

WNV is a viral disease which infects the brain and central nervous system. The virus is maintained in birds and is transmitted from birds to horses by mosquitoes. The disease is prevalent throughout the U.S. including the South East. Like EEE and WEE there is no cure for WNV. Horses that do recover from WN can have lasting effects.

Rabies

Rabies is a viral disease which infects the nervous system. It is not incredibly common in horses but is **always** fatal. Horses contract the disease from being bitten by other infected animals, most commonly wildlife, such as raccoons, foxes or bats. It is also important to remember people can contract rabies from an infected horse. It is highly recommend all horse be vaccinated for rabies.

Equine Herpes Virus (EHV-1 and EHV-4)

EHV, also known as Rhinopneumonitis, affects the respiratory, reproductive and neurologic system. EHV is similar to other herpes viruses, once infected the horse will remain infected for life. The disease remains latent and under the right circumstances will replicate and be shed by carriers. EHV is spread by aerosolized secretions from infected horses. The goal of vaccination is to reduce the transmission and severity of clinical signs associated with EHV. The vaccine, like other vaccines is not 100% effective. Immunity received from EHV vaccination is short lived; high risk horses may need boosted several times a year. High risk horse are:

- Horses less than 5 years old
- Horses on breeding farms or in contact with pregnant mares.
- Horse at facilities with increased movement
- Performance and show horses who travel

There are several products on the market for EHV protection. Your horse and their needs will determine which vaccine and how often it is needed.

Equine Influenza

Equine influenza is one of the most common infectious diseases of the respiratory tract. Equine influenza is a highly contagious virus which spreads rapidly through groups of horses. The severity of clinical signs is related to the level of immunity of the horse. Similar to EHV, vaccination may not fully prevent the disease but has been shown to reduce clinical signs. There are several products on the market for Equine Influenza vaccination. It is important to use a product that contains the most current strain of the flu virus. Your horse individual situation will determine which product is best.

Potomac Horse Fever (PHF)

PHF is caused by the organism *Neorickettsia risticii*. It is a sporadic disease found predominantly in the area surrounding the Potomac River. PHF has now been found in several other areas in the United States and Canada. It most commonly occurs in the months of July, August and September. Clinical signs include fever, diarrhea, laminitis and mild colic. PHF is rarely diagnosed in the south eastern United States. Current vaccines are not highly effective against preventing the disease.

Rotoviral Diarrhea

Rotovirus is an important cause of diarrhea in foals. It is usually diagnosed in foals less than 2 months of age. Vaccination of the pregnant mare is the best way to provide immunity to the foal.

Strangles (*Streptococcus equi*)

Strangles is a highly contagious disease of the upper respiratory tract caused by the organism *Streptococcus equi*. Most commonly a disease of the young horse *S. equi* can infect horses of any age. Clinical signs include high fevers, difficulty breathing and abscessed lymph nodes. Strangles is transmitted by direct contact with infected horse or indirectly by contact with water troughs, feed buckets, pasture, stalls, tack, grooming equipment, and people contaminated with pus from infected animals. Not all horse infected with strangles will shown clinical signs. Subclinical carriers, animals infected but not showing clinical signs of disease, are the most common means of transmission. Sanitation is important in reducing spread of strangles. Adverse affects can occur with vaccination; therefore the risks must be evaluated before vaccinating.