

EQUINE VACCINATIONS.



There are three diseases which we commonly vaccinate against. These are:

1. Tetanus
2. Equine Influenza
3. Equine Herpes Virus

TETANUS

Tetanus is caused by toxins produced by a soil living bacterium, called *Clostridium tetani*. The bacteria enters via wounds, especially deep puncture wounds and multiply. Clinical signs of tetanus are usually seen 10-14 days after the bacteria has entered the wound. The toxins produced by the bacteria cause the horse's muscles to continually contract. Initially the horse will appear slightly stiff, but will get progressively stiffer and less able to move.

Treatment is intensive, expensive and very often unsuccessful. Vaccination is very effective and the only means of preventing this disease. All horse should be vaccinated against tetanus. Two injections are required 4-6 weeks apart. A booster is needed at 12 months and then every two years afterwards.

EQUINE INFLUENZA

Equine influenza is caused by subtypes of influenza A virus. They cause acute respiratory disease and are very contagious over a wide area. Clinical signs include coughing, nasal discharge, raised temperature, dull and off food.

Due to its contagious nature all horses, which compete, are required to be vaccinated against "flu". Please note that since the 1st January 2005, the FEI requirement for equine influenza vaccination are for booster vaccination at 6 month intervals. This only applies to horses competing regularly under FEI rules. Rarely it may apply to horses entering and competing on an FEI competition ground. Remember that the influenza vaccination may not be given within 7 days of an FEI competition or entry onto an FEI competition ground.

Vaccination protocol:	1st vaccination	
	2nd Vaccination	given 21-92 days later (normally 4-6 weeks)
	3rd vaccination	given 150-215 after 2nd vaccination (normally 5-6 months)
	Repeat every 365 days thereafter (unless under FEI rules)	

EQUINE HERPES VIRUS

Equine Herpes Virus (EHV) is a major cause of acute respiratory disease. It can also cause abortions and early foal deaths and neurological/paralytic disorders.

Respiratory disease is relatively widespread in foals and yearlings. Three quarters of infected animals become carriers of the virus, which can be reactivated later in life during periods of stress e.g. travelling, training and competing. In older horses they tend to suffer from poor performance, rather than outright respiratory disease.

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EHV is the most common cause of infectious abortion in late pregnancy. Abortions are usually sporadic, but you can see “abortion storms” on a particular stud. If pregnant mares come into contact with virus very late in their pregnancy, the foal may be born alive, but die shortly after.

Neurological/paralytic disease is seen as isolated incidents, in older animal, more usually mares. Horses can become recumbent (i.e. unable to get up), and if so the outlook is poor.

Vaccination against EHV is most commonly used in competition and racing yards, and in brood mares. Vaccination is best done on a “whole yard basis”, although individuals horses can still benefit.