



FACTSHEET

EQUINE VACCINATIONS

Influenza is a respiratory virus that is easily spread in the air from horse to horse or via nasal secretions on a handlers clothes or equipment. Signs of infection, which begin to develop days after viral exposure, include a husky cough and nasal discharge (which changes over a period of four to five days from thin to thick mucus), combined with general signs of ill health. Influenza debilitates the animal, leaving a horse susceptible to secondary infections. It may also develop into a more serious respiratory disorder. Recovery may take several weeks and the horse may take even longer to return to full health.

Prevention is better than cure and horses should be vaccinated routinely against the most common strains of equine influenza. Vaccination is compulsory for horses competing in most equestrian sports. The immunity generated from vaccination is not long lived hence yearly boosters are required throughout a horses life. Horses in high risk environments such as those competing abroad, require twice yearly vaccination.

Tetanus is caused by a nasty bacteria *Clostridium tetani*, commonly found in the soil and often present in horse dung. Horses are infected through broken skin or wounds. The infection takes three weeks to have an obvious effect, with the first signs (muscle stiffness, spasms and a reluctance to move) often becoming apparent some time after the wound has healed. The reaction of the animal to sudden noise or movement is heightened, causing violent, uncontrollable body spasms. Younger horses and those with impaired health are at greater risk. Un-vaccinated horses usually die from respiratory paralysis shortly after contracting tetanus, with fewer than ten per cent surviving. Recovery requires extensive veterinary treatment and nursing throughout the long period of convalescence.

Vaccination provides simple, cheap and effective protection against tetanus and is therefore to be recommended in **ALL** horses even those just at pasture.

Although we will send out vaccine reminders for annual boosters by text or as a reminder card, these can be mislaid or delayed in the post and so it remains your responsibility to ensure your horse's vaccines are done within the rules laid out below. It is essential that the horse's passport is present so the attending vet can check and sign the passport.

Competition animals must comply with the rules laid out by the governing body of their sport. Many livery yards will also require influenza and tetanus vaccines to be up to date.

Flu and Tetanus:

A course of 3 injections are required -

1st vaccination (foals can be started age 5-6 months)

2nd vaccination, between 21 to 92 days after the 1st vaccine (~ 4-6 weeks later) horses can compete after 7 clear days from their second vaccination.

3rd vaccination, between 150 to 215 days after the 2nd vaccine (~5-6 months later)

then yearly, this must be within 365 days – advise day before existing one to avoid leap year mishaps.

NB: FEI horses need 6 monthly vaccines to protect against Influenza.

Tetanus only:

A course of 3 injections are required -

1st vaccination

2nd vaccination 4-6 weeks after 1st

3rd vaccination 3 years later then every 3 years.

Vaccinations against **herpes** virus and **strangles** are also available at request. Herpes virus vaccination is advised for all pregnant mares at 5, 7 and 9 months to reduce the risk of abortion. Please contact us for further advice.

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