

Vaccinations

Vaccinations are an important part of your horse's health care program. They can literally mean the difference between life and death. We encourage all of our clients to get yearly vaccinations. The vaccines we recommend for our area are: rabies, eastern and western encephalitis, west nile virus, influenza and rhinopneumonitis. Strangles is also recommended for horses 4 years of age and younger who are traveling to shows and/or training barns.

There are a lot of good companies making vaccines for horses. We are very proud to use Boehringer -Ingelheim brand vaccines. Why? 1.) Their purification process tends to produce fewer vaccine reactions. 2) Boehringer-Ingelheim is the only vaccine on the market with the most current strain of flu, the '03 strain. 3) They are labeled for once a year protection. 4) They stand behind their product 100% and will pay for treatment if your horse becomes ill from one of the diseases he/she was vaccinated for when the vaccine is administered by a veterinarian. Once a year vaccinations with safer and better protection!

Rabies- Rabies is 100% lethal and there is no treatment for a rabid horse. It is transmitted by the bite of an infected animal. There is also a large concern with human exposure. Rabies vaccines are only available through a veterinarian.

East and West Encephalitis- Mosquitoes transmit encephalitis. Rapid progression of neurologic signs is seen which can include head pressing, circling, seizures and coma. Full recovery from encephalitis is rare and the fatality rate with eastern encephalitis is over 80% and over 50% with western encephalitis.

Tetanus- Horses are extremely sensitive to tetanus. The environment that our horses live in make them even more vulnerable. Tetanus is extremely difficult to recover from and often requires hospitalization and long term care.

Flu- Just as in people flu has many strains and they are evolving all the time. We use the Boehringer-Ingelheim vaccine because it has the most current strain of flu included in its vaccine-the '03 strain. Flu can cause damage to the lungs and lead to AID-airway inflammatory disease and require long term treatment. It can also open the door to secondary bacterial invasion leading to a bacterial pneumonia. Horses traveling long distance can develop shipping fever-severe bacterial pneumonia with lung abscesses that can lead to laminitis and can be fatal. Vaccination with flu/rhino vaccine is very important if your horses travel, comes into contact with new horses, is young or is elderly.

Rhino-Two strains of rhino are seen in horses. Equine herpes virus 1 and 4. Rhino can cause respiratory infection also opening the door to secondary bacterial infection, late term abortions and neurologic problems.

Strangles- Strangles is a bacteria, but it moves with the speed of a virus. It is extremely contagious and is called strangles because it can swell lymph nodes in the throat to the point that it sounds as if the horse is strangling when he/she tries to breathe. Strangles can cause guttural pouch infections, sinus infections and even move into the lymph nodes in the abdomen. Once a horse has been exposed to it he/she gains immunity. It is usually considered a young horse disease but occasionally an older horse will develop strangles if he/she was not vaccinated early in life but more commonly an older horse will show signs of bastard strangles- strangles which develops in an odd location such as the abdomen due to previous infection with strangles. Vaccination for strangles is highly debated due to some reports that over vaccination actually promotes strangles. Regardless, we have had good success vaccinating the 4 year old and younger age group and those at risk.

West Nile Virus- Transmitted by biting insects with birds as a reservoir for infection. Neurologic signs can be seen quickly and hospitalization may be required. West Nile vaccines used to lessen the risk of dying from West Nile and with new strains added and new technologies the West Nile vaccine is better than ever at preventing the actual disease.