

DISEASE CONTROL

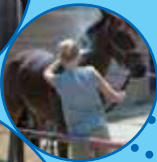
Despite all efforts to keep infectious disease out of your barn, it will occur occasionally. It is important to have a plan and a protocol in place to deal with such outbreaks. All sick horses should be considered infectious to others until a diagnosis has been made by the veterinarian, and the degree of contagiousness assessed.

Management

Sick horses should be quarantined away from healthy ones. Access to sick horses should be restricted, and all contact with healthy horses eliminated until a diagnosis is made. Signs should be posted advising of illness and quarantine. Footbaths and hand sanitizers should be available to everyone leaving the quarantine area. There should be no shared water source or feed utensils (i.e. feed tubs). Stall cleaning equipment needs to be cleaned and disinfected before being used in a non-affected area. Stalls or quarantine areas must be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected prior to being used by healthy horses.

Handling sick horses

Specific individuals should be assigned to handle sick horses. They should not be handling healthy horses as well. If unavoidable, the healthy horses should always be handled first. Protective clothing, boots, and latex gloves should be used when handling sick horses, and removed and properly disposed of when finished. Proper hand washing must also be performed prior to touching any healthy animals.



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Disinfectants

Follow label instructions when using disinfectants, and DO NOT MIX with other chemicals. Be aware of their disposal requirements. Choose a disinfectant that will work in the situation that exists, and that is safe for use around horses and people. Consult your veterinarian.

How to Disinfect: Surfaces must be clean of all organic material for disinfectants to work. Brush off loose dirt and manure first. If possible, wash the item with detergent first (laundry or dish soap works well) and then use a disinfectant. Most grooming tools can be dipped in disinfectant. Tack can be wiped with a disinfectant wipe or a disinfectant-dampened cloth. Shoes can be brushed or scrubbed off and then sprayed with disinfectant, or foot dips may be employed at the entrance/exit of a facility.

Examples of disinfectants

Household Bleach: Mix 3/4 cup of bleach per 4.5 litres of water. If you don't have a measuring cup handy, you can mix 1 part bleach to 10 parts water. This formula works for shoes, grooming equipment, buckets, shovels, and pitchforks. When you use bleach, make sure all dirt and manure have been cleaned off first, as bleach is inactivated by organic matter.

Spray Disinfectant: Be sure the label claims it kills bacteria and viruses. Sprays can work well on shoes, grooming equipment, and tack. Remove all manure and dirt before spraying.

Hand Sanitizers: They come in gels or hand wipes. These are good for use at a show or after visiting other horses. Be sure to work the cleaner all through your fingers and under your nails.

Other Commercial Disinfectants: Always mix and use according to the label. Use products that are effective even when there is a little manure or dirt left on the surface. These are good choices for disinfecting trailers and car tires, and they also work well in footbaths.



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"Visitors who travel from farm to farm and work with livestock or manure can carry disease causing organisms onto your farm."



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BIOSECURITY:

Doing everything you can to reduce the chances of an infectious disease being carried onto your farm by people, animals, equipment, or vehicles by reducing exposure to infectious agents, and minimizing spread once disease occurs. Biosecurity protocols for individual facilities should be developed in coordination with the local veterinarian serving the facility.



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PREVENTION

Vaccination

Work with your veterinarian to develop a vaccination program that is appropriate for your horses and for the environment in which they are kept. Recommendations will be based on your veterinarian's assessment of the risks. Consideration must be given to the diseases that are prevalent or anticipated in your area, the degree of protection provided by vaccination, and the risk that you are willing to assume by not vaccinating your horse. Remember that vaccination will help enhance the resistance to specific diseases and minimize the chances that your horses will become infected, but it will not prevent disease in all circumstances. It is best to vaccinate horses at least one month prior to entering or leaving a new facility. Good management and biosecurity practices will compliment a good vaccination program. Diseases that may be vaccinated against include:

- Tetanus
- Eastern/Western Equine Encephalitis (EEE/WEE)
- Influenza
- Equineherpes Virus (Type 1 & 4, Rhino)
- Streptococcus equi (Strangles)
- West Nile Virus
- Potomac Horse Fever (PHF)
- Equine Viral Arteritis (EVA)
- Rabies
- Botulism
- Rotavirus
- Anthrax

Some diseases may not be relevant to your horse or your area so it is important that you consult your veterinarian. Also see "Guidelines for the vaccination of horses" on the American Association of Equine Practitioners website. (www.aaep.org)

Travelling with your horse: Don't bring anything home with you!

Horses are at an increased risk of infectious diseases when they are housed with other horses who have different levels of stress, different backgrounds and varying ages. These conditions are commonly present on breeding farms, in sales or boarding facilities, in training barns, on show grounds, and at racetracks. It is important to remember that infectious agents can be shed from an apparently healthy horse. Biosecurity is especially important when dealing with horses of unknown disease or exposure status.



- Use your own trailer. Don't ship your horses with horses from other farms.
- Ship only in a trailer that has been cleaned and disinfected. If you can "smell horse" in the empty trailer, it has not been cleaned and disinfected properly.
- Don't let your horse touch other horses, especially nose to nose.
- Don't share equipment (water & feed buckets, brushes, etc).
- Wash your hands, especially after helping other people with their horses.
- Don't let strangers pet your horse, especially persons with horses at home or who have been out of the country in the past 2 weeks.
- Before leaving the show grounds, clean and disinfect tack, boots, equipment and grooming supplies. Brush off dirt or manure and then disinfect (spray or wipes are easy to take with you).
- When you get home; shower, blow your nose and put on clean clothes and shoes before going near other horses.



Bringing horses home from an event

- If any of your horses travel away from home, all of your horses need to be vaccinated regularly. Horses that travel to events can bring home bacteria and viruses. Discuss with your veterinarian which vaccinations the horses need and how often.
- If possible, isolate the horses for at least 2 weeks, making sure there is no nose to nose contact.
- Remember to clean and disinfect your horse trailer!

Bringing in new horses

This is the most likely way for infectious diseases to come in.

- Keep every new horse isolated for 30 days. Don't use pitchforks, grooming tools, feed or water buckets on any horse but the new one. Label these with red tape, or use red brushes, etc. only for the isolation area.
- Limit the contact that people have with these horses.
- Examination by your veterinarian can help detect potentially infectious risks.
- Work with the isolated horse last each day. Alternatively, wear boots and coveralls when working with the isolated horse and remove them before working or going near other horses. You can keep these in a plastic-covered tub near the horse.
- Fever is a common early warning sign of an infectious disease. Monitoring rectal temperature daily may assist in early detection of disease.

When you visit other farms, show grounds, auction marts, racetracks, etc.

- Have a pair of shoes or boots that you save for visiting and don't wear around your own horse.
 - Wear plastic shoe covers, plastic bags work well.
- If you are going to be working with horses on another farm, wear coveralls or plan to change clothes before returning to your horse.



Equipment

- Equipment such as shovels, forks, feed and manure wagons should be cleaned and disinfected at regular intervals. This should also include the housing facilities as well.
- Each horse should have its own equipment. If sharing is necessary, equipment should be cleaned and disinfected between uses on each horse.



When visitors come to you

- It is best to have only one way in to your farm. Mark this as the main entrance.
- Keep parking areas away from the horses so disease-carrying organisms are not tracked in on tires. If the farrier or veterinarian needs to park closer, be sure both their tires and shoes have been disinfected.
- Keep a visitor's log. If a disease outbreak occurs, your log might help trace the problem.
- Provide clean outerwear (coveralls) and boots. Plastic disposable booties are suitable for shorter visits but can be slippery and subject to tears.
- Visitors should be asked not to touch any horses.
- Visitors should be instructed in proper hand washing and disinfection if they do touch the horses. Proper washing areas and disinfectant soaps should be provided.

