



VET NOTES

September 2010

Previous VET NOTES

- July 2010 - Rhodococcus in foals
- June 2010 - Wound Management
- March 2010 - Pharmacy Notes
- February 2010 - Cryptorchidism in the horse
- December 2009 - Selection of mares for embryo transfer
- October 2009 - Tying-up Syndrome
- September 2009 - Flexural deformities in the forelimbs of foals
- August 2009 - Equine Cushing's Disease
- July 2009 - Corneal ulcers
- June 2009 - Laparoscopic surgery: A new way to look at things
- May 2009 - Equine cardiology
- April 2009 - Single screw compression update
- March 2009 - Resistance to anti-parasitic drugs
- November 2008 - Periodontal Disease
- October 2008 - Interstitial pneumonia - a different kind of lung disease
- September 2008 - The yearling sales
- August 2008 - Eastern Equine Encephalitis—have you vaccinated

Vaccines

Both veterinarians and horse owners alike have a common goal to provide pet and patient with a long and healthy life. Good nutrition and proper housing are important elements in achieving that goal. Another essential part of the routine care we can provide to horses is vaccination.

A vaccine works by introducing some form of a disease-causing organism into the horse in an attempt to create an immune response. This immune response will help the horse fight that disease if encountered in the future. Sometimes vaccinated horses still become ill, but this does not mean we should stop vaccinating. Some diseases can occur as an outbreak and spread rapidly through a farm. Vaccinating your horses can help lessen the severity of an outbreak so only a few horses become ill instead of the majority of the herd.

There are several equine vaccines available that target different diseases and come in various combinations. Although vaccines are important, there is no single regimen that applies to all horses. Things that can affect which vaccines are right for your horse include age, travel, occupation, and geographical location. For instance, an older horse that stays on the farm in an established group would have different vaccine requirements than a thoroughbred in the racing circuit or even a broodmare. The AAEP considers certain vaccines to be “core.” In other words, they are recommended for use in the majority of horses. These include Tetanus, EEE/WEE, Rabies, and West Nile Virus. Other vaccines are for use only if warranted, such as Potomac Horse Fever, Botulism, Rhinopneumonitis, Influenza, and Strangles, among others. To give you an idea of how beneficial vaccinations can be, four of the five core diseases are often fatal and are a definite threat in Florida! These diseases are described below:

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K. Ryan Meeks, DVM

1. Tetanus: a disease caused by a type of bacteria, *Clostridium tetani*, which is found in the soil almost everywhere. Horses can contract this disease of paralysis in many ways, most commonly through wounds such as punctures or surgical sites. Foals can also contract the disease through the umbilical stump.
2. Eastern Equine Encephalomyelitis (EEE): a disease of the central nervous system caused by a virus and transmitted by mosquitoes. EEE is almost always fatal, and can lead to lasting neurologic deficits if the animal survives.
3. West Nile Virus (WNV) : a disease of the central nervous system caused by a virus and is also transmitted by mosquitoes. WNV is usually only fatal in 30% of cases unless the horse becomes unable to stand. It is 70% fatal in these cases.
4. Rabies: a viral disease of the nervous system which is invariably fatal. It is spread by bites from infected animals such as foxes, bats, skunks and raccoons.

In these tough economic times, skipping the core vaccines is not an area to cut back on. A small investment in vaccines can potentially help to save the life of your horse and save the expense of intensive care.

This may be a lot of information to process, but working with your veterinarian will help to determine the proper vaccine schedule for your horse. Both vaccine choice and administration schedule are important to the success of disease control. Please do not hesitate to talk with your veterinarian to be certain that you are providing the best protection for your horse. His/her health depends on it!

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Julie Janksy
Ambulatory technician
(352) 237 6151

- July 2008 - Castration complications
- June 2008 - The use of acupuncture as a diagnostic aid in the equine lameness exam
- April 2008 - Current parasite control recommendations
- March 2008 - The use of Oxytocin in the post-partum mare
- January 2008 - Preparing your mares for the breeding season
- January 2008 - Proximal hind limb suspensory desmitis: (PSD): Part II: Treatment
- December 2007 - Pleuropneumonia - when shipping fever turns into a nightmare
- November 2007 - Proximal hind limb suspensory desmitis (PSD): Part I: Diagnosis

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4747 SW 60th Avenue
Ocala, FL 34474

Phone: (352) 237-6151
Fax: (352) 237-0629
Email: PSEH@petersonsmith.com

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