

## Vaccinations

At Abbey, we recommend vaccinations against Tetanus and Equine Influenza for all equines.

**Tetanus** is a life threatening disease caused by a bacterial toxin which affects the nervous system. The bacteria that produce the toxin are very common and found in soil. They can easily enter the horse through minor cuts, grazes, or damaged feet causing Tetanus to develop. The tetanus bacterium is present in this area and we see cases of this several times a year. Treatment requires intensive care and a lot of horses do not survive. A simple, inexpensive vaccination programme can completely prevent this distressing and unnecessary disease.

### Tetanus vaccination schedule



**Equine Influenza (flu)** is a respiratory virus that spreads very easily from horse to horse. It causes the horse to be lethargic for several weeks, and signs often include a nasal discharge, fever and coughing. Equine Influenza outbreaks are still regular occurrences in the UK, and the only reason that they remain confined to a small area is because so many horses and ponies are now vaccinated. We particularly recommend 'flu vaccinations in all youngstock and older horses, all horses that mix with horses from other yards eg competing or hacking out, and all horses kept on yards with different horses arriving and leaving. Influenza vaccination is required horses competing or going to training events under most governing bodies, e.g. riding and pony clubs, BSJA, BE, BD and under Jockey Club rules (please summary at end of page).

### Equine Influenza vaccination schedule



Vaccinations all include a free health check, so they are a valuable opportunity for the vet to pick up on the early signs of any problems. The vets are also very happy to discuss management, worming, any other questions you may have, and to check your horse's teeth at the time of the vaccination.

Vaccinations can be done at a home or yard visit, where you can share the visit fee between different horses, or why not bring the horse to the clinic and save the visit fee? Please give us a call if you would like further information.

## **Influenza vaccination guidelines for competition horses**

Initial programme:

- First vaccination: 21-92days: second vaccination: 150-215days: third vaccination

(for competition entry a horse is considered vaccinated 7 days after the second vaccination)

- Annual boosters (for racing/riding club)

or

- Boosters every 6 months (FEI competitions)

## Herpes

The herpes virus is responsible for three syndromes in the horse:

1. Abortion in pregnant mares.
2. Upper respiratory tract infection
3. Neurological disease.

The virus is spread via aerosol inhalation i.e. in the air. Protection is available in the form of a vaccination, the timing of which is determined by the syndrome being guarded against. Where the concern is mainly respiratory, there is a vaccination which combines 'flu and herpes (Equillus Resequin) which is both effective and economic. It has been shown that the maximal protection against herpes abortion has been to vaccinate in mid to late pregnancy.

### **VACCINE PROTOCOL:**

**General protection against upper respiratory/neurological syndromes either in the form of herpes only vaccine or Equillus Resequin (Flu and Herpes).** Initial course - 2 vaccinations 3 - 6 weeks apart then boosters every 6 months.

**Pregnant mares and abortion prevention:** Given during pregnancy at 5, 7 and 9 months of gestation.

## Frequently Asked Questions:

### ***Can I ride my horse after they have received their vaccination?***

The vaccines we use today are not live vaccines as they have been in years gone by. We normally suggest only light work (ie not getting into a sweat) for 24-48 hours after the vaccination.

Vaccination reactions are rare, and if they occur are usually confined to a soft tissue swelling where the injection was administered.

### ***When can my foal start its vaccinations?***

Foals receive antibodies from their mothers via colostrums (in the first 12 hours of life). Therefore it is important to make sure the mare has a good immunity before foaling. Therefore we recommend giving a Tetanus booster in the last 4-6 weeks of pregnancy which will then provide the foal with some protection for the first 6-12 weeks of life.

If the mare is not covered for tetanus, then an injection of tetanus antitoxin (an 'antidote' to the tetanus infection) should be given to the foal as soon as possible after birth to provide temporary cover for 3-4 weeks.

Foals can start their vaccinations from 5 months of age.