

PROTECTING HORSES AND OWNERS FROM RABIES

INCIDENCE OF RABIES IN HORSES

- Most horses are unprotected against rabies.
- But horses are very exposed to wildlife.
- **THE INCIDENCE RATE OF RABIES IS 4 TIMES HIGHER IN HORSES THAN IN DOGS.^{1,2,3}**





TRANSMISSION

- Rabies is most commonly spread by saliva from the bite of an infected animal.⁴
- Rabies can be spread when infected saliva reaches open cuts, wounds or mucous membranes (e.g. mouth, nasal cavity, eyes).⁴

CLINICAL SIGNS OF RABIES IN HORSES^{4,5}

IT CAN LOOK LIKE ANYTHING, INCLUDING:

- **Colic**
- Hypersensitivity to stimuli
- Head pressing
- Aggression
- Incoordination
- Lameness
- Recumbency
- Paresis
- Loss of appetite
- Fever
- Depression

CLINICAL OUTCOMES

- In horses, a rabid bite wound is frequently undetected.^{6,7}
- During incubation, a horse may not show clinical signs of rabies for 2-6 weeks and sometimes for several months.⁸
- Once clinical signs appear, rabies is fatal⁹ and most horses will die within 4-5 days,⁴ though it can take longer.

PREVENTION OF RABIES

- Rabies can be prevented through vaccination.
- **ACCORDING TO THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF EQUINE PRACTITIONERS (AAEP), RABIES SHOULD BE A CORE VACCINE FOR ALL EQUIDS.⁵**

References:

1. Ma X, Monroe BP, Cleaton JM, et al. Rabies surveillance in the United States during 2016. *J Am Vet Med Assoc.* 2018 Apr 15;252(8):945-957. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/29595389> Accessed November 21, 2018. **2.** American Society for the Protection of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA). Pet Statistics: <https://www.aspc.org/animal-homelessness/shelter-intake-and-surrender/pet-statistics> Accessed November 21, 2018. **3.** American Horse Council. 2017 Economic Impact Study of the US Horse Industry. <https://www.horsecouncil.org/product/2017-economic-impact-study-u-s-horse-industry/> Accessed November 21, 2018. **4.** Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. Rabies and Horses. http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/livestock/horses/facts/info_rabies.htm Accessed November 21, 2018. **5.** American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP). Rabies. <https://aaep.org/guidelines/vaccination-guidelines/core-vaccination-guidelines/rabies> Accessed November 21, 2018. **6.** Horton DL. Animal Health Trust. Equine Rabies. <https://www.aht.org.uk/skins/Default/pdfs/defrajan-mar12focus.pdf> Accessed December 4, 2018. **7.** Green SL, Smith LL, Vernau W, et al. Rabies in horses: 21 cases (1970-1990). *J Am Vet Med Assoc.* 1992 Apr 15;200(8):1133-7. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/1607322> Accessed December 4, 2018. **8.** American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP). Rabies (rhabdovirus). https://aaep.org/sites/default/files/Guidelines/Rabies_PDF.pdf Accessed December 4, 2018. **9.** American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP). Rabies Has Many Faces. <https://aaep.org/horsehealth/rabies-has-many-faces> Accessed December 4, 2018.