

Equine Herpes Virus

Equine Herpes Virus - The Facts*

Equine herpesvirus-1 (EHV-1, rhinopneumonitis) is a highly contagious infection that can cause respiratory disease in weanlings and young horses, abortion in pregnant mares, and neurologic disease in adult horses.

Below is an outline on the signs and symptoms, treatment and biosecurity measures that should be in place, should an infection occur. If you have any concerns about whether your horse is infected please consult your veterinarian immediately.

Sign and Symptoms

- Fever
- Respiratory disease - runny/snotty nose & cough
- Malaise (depression, lethargy)
- Abortions in mares - usually between month 7 & 11 of gestation
- Lack of appetite

Treatment

- Isolating affected/potentially affected horses to stop the spread of the disease
- Providing supportive care to protect ataxic horses from hurting themselves;
- Meeting nutritional requirements and maintaining hydration;
- Decreasing inflammation in the brain and spinal cord by administering anti-inflammatory drugs (e.g., corticosteroids, non-steroidal anti-inflammatories, dimethylsulfoxide); and
- Expressing the urinary bladder.

Biosecurity measures - isolate and contain

- Instituting good hygiene and disinfecting any area an affected horse has been;
- Not allowing nose-to-nose contact between horses or sharing of equipment;
- Monitoring horses' temperatures daily;
- Isolating affected/suspected horses;
- Dedicating specific people to care for affected horses and instituting barriers such as foot baths, gloves, and gowns;
- Isolating/monitoring in-contact horses for 21-28 days after disease resolution;
- Separating resident from visiting horses and show horses from breeding stock;
- Controlling human traffic on the farm and minimizing/eliminating movement on and off the farm.

Not only are these biosecurity measures important during an outbreak, they also help avoid introducing and/or disseminating EHV-1 or other respiratory disease to a closed herd.

For further information on EHV follow these links:

<http://www.horsetalk.co.nz/health/176-ehv.shtml>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FXMo85-iAzw>

*Sourced from www.thehorse.com and Merck Veterinary Manual

