

RABIES

QUICK FACTS

General Facts

Rare, but terminal, rabies is contracted through the bite of an infected or “rabid” animal. It manifests through unpredictable clinical signs and results in fatal brain swelling. **An unvaccinated horse will not survive infection, and its saliva poses a risk to humans and other animals.**

- Fewer than 100 cases are reported in horses each year, but 100% of them are fatal¹
- Horses are typically bitten on their face, muzzle or limbs after investigating the rabid animal
- The number of rabies cases is increasing due, in large part, to urbanization of areas where wildlife is infected
- Stalled horses are at risk as wildlife is drawn to feed rooms and barns
- Due to serious threat for human exposure, any suspected case of rabies should be handled as if it were positive until proven otherwise

100% fatal. Always preventable.

Clinical Signs

The signs of rabies infection can be nonspecific and confusing. Veterinarians often say it can “look like anything,” making diagnosis challenging and initial misdiagnosis common. However, at some point during the course of the disease, most rabid horses exhibit:

- Sensitivity to touch
- Fever
- Paralysis or impaired balance



Diagnosis

- There is no definitive test to diagnose rabies in a live animal
- Diagnosis is made by examining the brain of the deceased animal



Most Commonly Infected Animals



Raccoons



Foxes



Skunks



Bats

Note: Any mammal can contract and spread rabies.

Treatment and Recovery

If an unvaccinated horse is bitten by a rabid animal, contact your state animal health official. Protocol varies from state to state, but often the bitten animal must be euthanized immediately or quarantined for 6 months.

No treatment options are available to animals showing clinical signs. All confirmed equine rabies cases are fatal.

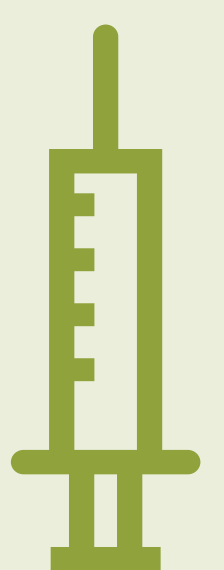


Important! If a human comes in contact with a rabid animal's saliva via bite or handling of an infected animal, seek medical treatment immediately.

Prevention

Prevention through vaccination is the best way to protect your horse against rabies.

- **Rabies is considered a core vaccination that every horse should receive every year²**
- Adult horses previously vaccinated against rabies should be revaccinated annually
- If a previously vaccinated horse is bitten by a rabid animal, please contact state animal health officials immediately



Talk to your veterinarian to ensure your horse is current on rabies protection.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

www.AAEP.org/guidelines
www.aphis.usda.gov

For more information on the PRESTIGE® EquiRab® rabies vaccine, visit PrestigeVaccines.com.

REFERENCES:

¹Ma, X. et al. Rabies Surveillance in the United States in 2017. *J Am Vet Med Assoc* 2018;253:1555–1568.
²AAEP Core Vaccination Guidelines (aaep.org).



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