
FLU AND TETANUS

Equine Influenza or 'Flu' is a highly infectious viral disease that effects the respiratory system causing fever, nasal discharge and a dry harsh cough. It spreads rapidly between horses via direct contact from an infected horse or through contaminated environment/air. Although rarely fatal it can be a debilitating disease with a prolonged recovery time. A number of disease outbreaks have occurred in unvaccinated animals in the UK over the last 3 years.

Tetanus is caused by endotoxins released by the bacterium *Clostridium tetani*, the spores of this bacterium are commonly found in the soil and may be found in horses' faeces. It can enter the body via wounds causing clinical signs include muscle stiffness, difficulty eating and drinking as well as increased sensitivity to light and sound. These horses require intensive veterinary care for up to 6 weeks, but sadly tetanus is mostly a fatal condition. It is therefore essential that all horses and donkeys are vaccinated against it.

Initially your horse will need a course of 3 injections, following the first injection a second will need to be given 21-60 days later then a third 120-180 days after the second injection; yearly booster injections are needed thereafter. The primary course can be started any time after 5 months old. Competition owners should make sure their horse or pony is vaccinated in accordance to the governing body they are competing under.

Effective immunity against tetanus requires a primary course of two vaccinations given 4-6 weeks apart followed by a booster 12 months later. Subsequent vaccinations can be given at 2 yearly intervals. Most commonly tetanus is given as a combined vaccination alongside equine flu. If your horse sustains a wound and is not vaccinated for tetanus or the vaccination has lapsed; it is essential that your horse receives a tetanus antitoxin injection as soon as possible to prevent infection.



VACCINATION



What can you expect from a vaccination appointment from Tyrrells?

Viruses such as flu constantly mutate to form new strains therefore the vaccines used by Tyrrells Equine are the most up to date available. Although vaccinating may not rule out flu infection completely it will reduce the clinical signs shown if your horse does become exposed and also reduce the viral shedding once infected, thus reducing the spread.



On the day of vaccination, it is advised to not work your horse hard but gentle exercise is fine. Please make sure your horse's passport is present at the visit. Our vets will make sure your horse's vaccination is in date (within 12 months of the last vaccination) and decide which vaccination is needed (flu or combined flu and tetanus) before carrying out a short health check. The vaccination will be given into the muscle of the neck or chest of your horse. Occasionally horses may react to the vaccination which may result in a localised swelling around the vaccination site and sometimes a stiff neck. These reactions will usually resolve within a few days.



For further information on vaccinations or to book an appointment please contact the clinic on 01763 287744 / office@tyrrellsequine.co.uk

Flu and tetanus vaccination costs £52 and Flu vaccination costs £47
Inc. VAT (April 2025)