

Vaccinating Your Horse

The reason we vaccinate our horses is simple: We want to minimize their risk of contracting a life-threatening and/or infectious disease. Vaccination, however, is not an exact science and should be tailored to each horse's individual situation. Use this American Association of Equine Practitioners' [Vaccination Guidelines](#)-based "cheat sheet" and work with your veterinarian to devise an immunization program that's right for your horse.



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CORE VACCINES

Veterinarians recommend nearly all horses receive the core equine vaccines: tetanus, Eastern and Western equine encephalomyelitis (EEE/WEE), West Nile virus (WNV), and rabies.

	What Horses Need It?	How Many Times a Year?	Special Considerations
Tetanus	All horses	Once annually, after an initial two-dose series at a four- to six-week interval.	Revaccinate horses that sustain a wound or undergo surgery six or more months after their previous tetanus booster at the time of injury or surgery.
EEE/WEE	All horses	At least once annually, after an initial two-dose series at a four- to six-week interval.	Vaccinate high-risk horses in areas with year-round vectors (e.g., mosquitoes) twice yearly.
WNV	All horses	At least once annually, after an initial two-dose series at a four- to six-week interval.	Vaccinate high-risk horses in areas with year-round vectors (e.g., mosquitoes) twice yearly.
Rabies	All horses	Once annually.	

RISK-BASED VACCINES

Veterinarians recommend the following risk-based vaccines depending on the horse's region, population, and disease risk.

	What Horses Need It?	How Many Times a Year?	Special Considerations
Anthrax	Those pastured in areas where alkaline soil conditions favor the disease-causing organism.	Once annually, after an initial two-dose series at a two- to three-week interval.	Veterinarians do not recommend vaccinating pregnant mares.
Botulism	Horses, particularly pregnant mares, in Kentucky and the mid-Atlantic seaboard states; horses consuming large round hay bales, haylage, or silage; and foals born in endemic areas.	Once annually, after an initial three-dose series at four-week intervals.	
Equine Herpesvirus-1&4	Horses on breeding farms or in contact with pregnant mares, horses younger than 5, and performance horses or those commingling with other equine populations.	Every six months, after an initial three-dose series at four- to six-week intervals.	Veterinarians recommend vaccinating pregnant mares during Months 5, 7, and 9 of gestation.
Equine Viral Arteritis	All stallions and breeding stock.	Annually.	Isolate vaccinated horses for three weeks to avoid virus shedding.
Equine Influenza	Horses younger than 5 and those in frequent contact with large numbers of horses.	Every six to 12 months, depending on the horse's age and risk factors.	Pregnant mares and foals require different vaccination schedules, so work with your veterinarian to vaccinate these classes.
Leptospirosis	Horses over 6 months of age.	Annually, after an initial two-dose series at three- to four-week intervals.	Safe for pregnant mares in their second trimester.
Potomac Horse Fever	Horses on farms or in geographic areas where PHF has been confirmed.	Every six to 12 months, depending on risk factors, after an initial two-dose series at three- to four-week intervals.	Time vaccination to precede the anticipated peak challenge period of summer and fall.
Rotaviral Diarrhea	Pregnant mares.	A three-dose series at Months 8, 9, and 10 of gestation.	
Snakebite	Horses living in or travelling to regions where rattlesnakes are prevalent.	Every six months, after an initial three-dose series at one-month intervals.	Have your veterinarian contact the vaccine manufacturer regarding use in pregnant mares and foals younger than 6 months.
Strangles	Horses on premises where strangles is endemic.	Every six to 12 months, depending on risk factors, after an initial two-dose series at three-week intervals.	

While vaccination helps reduce your horse's disease risk, it does not prevent disease in all circumstances and without accompanying management practices. Work with your veterinarian to customize a vaccination protocol for your horse. 🐾