

What You Need To Know About Horse Vaccines

We all know the importance of vaccinating our horses every year. But, what do all those vaccines do? Are they really necessary? Most people always do what their veterinarian recommends. We'd like you to know why we make those recommendations. Here is a list of core vaccines, the diseases they fight, and the recommendations of Deerfield Veterinary Clinic.



Rabies

- Neurological disease of all warm-blooded mammals. Horses exhibit common signs including fever, dull attitude, and high sensitivity to light and sound. Usually leads to progressive paralysis that results in death. Typically spread through a bite wound from an infected animal.
- Rabies is endemic in New Hampshire and DVC highly recommends vaccinating all horses yearly.

West Nile Virus

- Often fatal neurological disease spread by mosquitoes. Studies have shown that vaccinated horses have a much higher survival rate should they contract the disease.
- DVC recommends all horses be vaccinated yearly for the West Nile Virus.

Equine Viral Encephalitis (EEE and WEE) *Part of 3-way Vaccine*

- Usually a fatal neurological disease in horses which is transmitted by mosquitoes and birds.
- DVC recommends vaccinating all horses 1-2 times a year depending on your horse's use and travel.

Tetanus (aka Lockjaw) *Part of 3-Way Vaccine*

- Disease in horses caused by toxins produced from a bacteria when it is introduced into a wound. This bacteria is found throughout the world in soil and feces.
- DVC recommends vaccinating all horses yearly for tetanus. This vaccine should also be given after any type of puncture wound and some lacerations.

Equine Herpes Virus (aka Rhinopneumonitis)

- Fights a respiratory disease in horses. Can cause a fatal neurological disease and abortions in pregnant mares. Can be carried by animals showing no clinical signs.
- This is a core vaccine for all pregnant mares to be given at 5, 7, and 9 months of gestation. For other horses, it could be given 1-2 times yearly depending on the factors listed below.

Other vaccines are available for horses including Influenza, Strangles, and Potomac Horse Fever. These vaccines should be given if your horse is one or more of the following:

1. Under the age of 5
2. On a breeding farm
3. On a farm where there is a lot of horse movement on and off the property
4. A performance or a show horse



Foals should start vaccines at the age of 4 months. Booster vaccines should be given at 6 and 12 months. These vaccines can be discussed with your veterinarian depending on the above criteria.