

Strangles Update – Spring 2018

Cases of *Streptococcus equi* (*S equi*), also known as “Strep Equi” or “Strangles” are on the rise this spring. This highly contagious upper respiratory infection is spread from horse to horse through direct contact or contact with a contaminated surface.

The incubation period of strangles is 3-14 days and the first sign of infection is fever (103-106° F). Within 24-48 hours of the initial fever spike, the horse will exhibit signs typical of strangles, including mucoid to mucopurulent nasal discharge, depression, and submandibular lymphadenopathy.

Diagnosis is confirmed by bacterial culture of exudate from abscesses or nasal swab samples and the primary treatment is supportive care.

Most horses continue to shed *S equi* for approximately one month after recovery, meaning effective prevention and control of strangles is heavily dependent on physical isolation and restricted movement of sick or at-risk horses.

The minimum isolation period should be one month and three negative nasopharyngeal swabs, at intervals of 4–7 days, should be obtained before release from quarantine.

We need your help to keep GMHA strangles free!

Using the guidelines outlined above, we ask that you not bring your horse to GMHA if –

- It has been in contact with an infected horse in the past 14 days
- It has been stabled at a property that has been under a voluntary or mandated quarantine until the quarantine is lifted and the infected horse(s) has had three negative nasopharyngeal swabs

Thank you for your cooperation and efforts to keep strangles from spreading.

Sources:

<https://www.merckvetmanual.com/respiratory-system/respiratory-diseases-of-horses/strangles-in-horses>

<http://www.equinediseasecc.org>

www.agriculture.vermont.gov