

Strangles Vaccination Update

A **new** strangles vaccine is available in the UK, and a recently published scientific review paper has proved more information about its safety and effectiveness. To help our clients make an informed decision as to whether it is right to vaccinate their horses with this new vaccine, we have put together this FAQ update:

Is the vaccine safe?

Yes, vaccine reactions were reported by clients in approximately 5% of horses (20 000 doses administered), these signs were largely similar to those seen with flu vaccinations and included running a temperature or soreness at the injection site. There was a single report of a more serious reaction.

Can my horse get strangles from the vaccine?

No, the vaccine relies on several proteins to stimulate the immune response, not the whole bacteria.

Will the vaccine stop my horse getting strangles?

No. This is a really important point to consider. The vaccine is reported to prevent disease in most vaccinated horses, but some horses may still show clinical signs, although these are reported to be milder than in the unvaccinated stable mates.

Is it better if all the horses on a yard are vaccinated?

Yes definitely! If all the horses on a yard are vaccinated, then the severity of a disease outbreak will be reduced.

However, as strangles requires fairly close contact, or direct spread via infected equipment e.g. water buckets, good biosecurity is still the best way of controlling disease even in vaccinated animals. So if you have individual horses, or small closed yards and do not compete, your horses will be at low risk for infection.

Can I still use the blood test/guttural pouch wash results if I need to move my horse?

Yes. Vaccinated horses can be differentiated from exposed horses using both these tests.



What is the vaccine schedule?

The recommended schedule is 2 vaccines, one month apart and then booster vaccinations are recommended every 2 months in high-risk situations. However, many vets in Europe have been recommending boosters every 6 months or 12 months depending on risk. Data is not available for vaccine efficacy over 12 months and therefore it is recommended that if it is more than 12 months since the last vaccine the course is restarted.

Should I vaccinate my horse against strangles?

Please give us a ring to discuss your individual situation, but if you are in a multi horse yard, and horses are being taken off the premises to compete or have lessons strangles vaccination is something to consider.

