

Equine Influenza

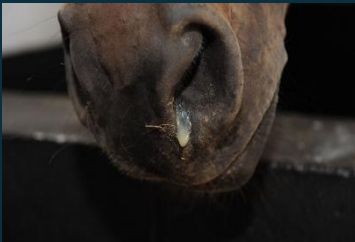
Equine influenza remains one of the most contagious respiratory diseases affecting horses, ponies, and donkeys. While rarely fatal, outbreaks can cause significant illness, disrupt training schedules, and spread rapidly across yards and competitions. Ensuring up-to-date vaccination and biosecurity measures are key to prevention. Unfortunately, it is currently spreading rapidly throughout England including the southwest

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EQUINE VETS



What Is Equine Influenza?

Equine influenza is caused by viruses that target the respiratory system. It spreads quickly in environments where horses are in close contact, such as livery yards, shows, and sales.



How It Spreads

The virus is transmitted through:

- Airborne droplets from coughing or sneezing horses (can travel large distances)
- Direct contact between horses, especially nose-to-nose interactions
- Contaminated equipment such as grooming tools, feed buckets, tack, or stable doors
- Human carriers on clothing, hands, or equipment moving between horses

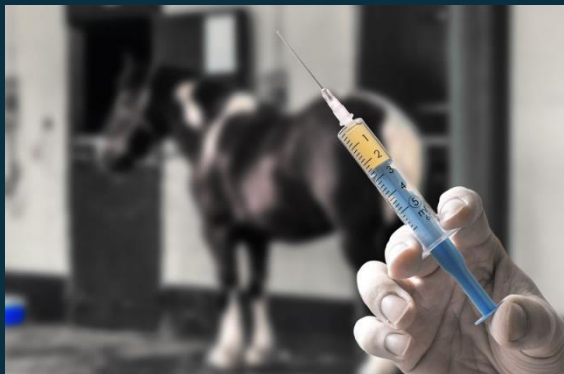
Clinical Signs to watch For

Typical signs appear suddenly and may include:

- High temperature (above 38.5°C up to 41°C / 106°F)
- A deep, harsh cough that can last several weeks
- Nasal discharge (watery to thick)
- Lethargy and loss of appetite
- Swollen glands under the jaw
- Increased respiratory rate and mild muscle soreness

Horses often require 2–3 weeks of rest and recovery, even in mild cases.





Vaccination: Your Best Defence

Regular vaccination is the most effective way to protect your horse and reduce outbreak severity. At Summerleaze Equine Vets, we use the Proteq vaccine which includes the OIE-recommended Clade 2 strains, providing up-to-date protection against the latest circulating viruses.

Even if your horse's previous vaccination was with a different product, a booster with Proteq will bring them up to date.

Key vaccination recommendations:

- Horses in competition or group environments ideally should receive a booster every six months.
- Young, unvaccinated, or lapsed horses will need a primary course (two doses 4–6 weeks apart, followed by a third dose after five months).
- If racing horses will need to have boosters every 6 months.
- If the horse is competing at FEI then it must be vaccinated within 6 months and 21 days of the competition.
- Maintain accurate vaccination records to comply with event and insurance requirements.
- Please note you can not compete within 7 days of a vaccination.
- Horses and donkeys can have mild reactions to vaccinations, if so it is important to contact us as they may require anti inflammatories. More details about vaccination services are available on our website: summerleaze-vets.co.uk/vaccinations.

Why It Matters?

Even mild cases can cause weeks of lost training or cancelled competition plans. Severe outbreaks close yards, restrict movement, and spread quickly within equestrian communities.

Vaccination and vigilance protect not only your own horse but also the wider equine population.

Protecting your horse from influenza protects every horse they meet.



Biosecurity and Prevention Tips

In addition to vaccination, simple steps can help protect your horse or donkey:

- Isolate new arrivals for at least 2 weeks before mixing with existing horses
- Avoid sharing water buckets, feed, or grooming equipment
- Wash hands and change clothing after handling multiple horses
- Disinfect stables and equipment regularly
- Monitor for early signs of illness and seek veterinary advice promptly

Contact us

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