

## Horse Vaccination Tips

**The effectiveness of vaccines relies, in part, on the effectiveness of the vaccination program. Follow the guidelines to strengthen your program.**

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While vaccinations can prevent or minimize disease, the effectiveness of vaccines also relies, in part, on the effectiveness of the vaccination program. Follow the guidelines below to help strengthen your program.

Vaccinate the whole herd. "If you just immunize one horse in a group," says Dr. Philip Johnson, "the other horses that are not immunized could generate up the virus as they get sick to the extent that the virus will overcome the effects of the vaccine in the protected horse."

Protect foals by vaccinating pregnant mares. As Dr. Johnson explains, this is the smartest tack a breeder can take because "a foal acquires its immunity for the first three or four months of its life from the mare and its first milk."

Adhere to a professionally administered routine. When you first start a horse on a vaccination program, you usually have to give two shots four to eight weeks apart in order for the horse to acquire immunity. Stick to the initial vaccine and booster schedule and leave the vaccinations to your veterinarian. "Vaccine failures can often be attributed to a vaccine that hasn't been properly stored, is over-date, and so forth," says Dr. Johnson. "Additionally, there is the very rare risk of an allergic reaction; if a horse does develop a reaction to the vaccine given by a horse owner, the horse might die from it." A veterinarian at the scene could counteract that potential tragedy.

Keep vaccination records. These should detail what vaccines were given and how often. It can be extremely difficult - and risky - to treat a horse for certain diseases if the animal's vaccination history isn't known. Tetanus, for example, requires the potentially perilous anti-serum if no tetanus history is available.

### Further Reading

[What to Expect When Vaccinating](#)

[Mosquito-Borne Diseases](#)

[Equine Vaccination Strategies](#)