

West Nile Virus and Your Horse



Is Your Horse Vaccinated Against West Nile Virus?

■ Is West Nile virus dangerous to my horse?

Yes, while data suggest that most horses infected with West Nile virus recover, results of investigations indicate that West Nile virus has caused deaths in horses in the United States.

■ How do horses become infected with this virus?

The same way humans become infected—by the bite of infectious mosquitoes. The virus is located in the mosquito's salivary glands. When mosquitoes bite or "feed" on the horse, the virus is injected into its blood system.

■ What are the symptoms?

Signs include stumbling, staggering, wobbly gait, or incoordination, circling, hind limb weakness, inability to stand, muscle fasciculation and paralysis.

■ When should I get my horse vaccinated?

You should first vaccinate your horse prior to spring and then again in three to six weeks. Both shots are required to guard against the virus. Your horse may need to be vaccinated twice yearly.

■ How do I get more information on the horse vaccination for West Nile Virus?

Contact your local veterinarian.

Other sources:

- www.vetmed.ucdavis.edu/ceh/wnv_info.html
- www.cdfa.ca.gov/ahfss/ah/wnv_info.htm
- California Department of Food & Agriculture, Animal Health Branch - 1(800) 429-1022.

