

# Equine Salmonella



Salmonella bacteria can cause illness and even death in foals and adult horses. The disease spreads easily and can be difficult to control and eradicate. However, vaccination and good general hygiene and management techniques can help prevent this disease in your horse.<sup>1</sup>

Salmonella is a bacterial disease which affects most mammals, including humans and birds. Salmonella infection causes diarrhoea, which can be debilitating and even fatal.<sup>1</sup>

There are more than 2,000 types of Salmonella, the most common is *S typhimurium*, this type of salmonella can make horses, cattle and humans very sick. Salmonella is a zoonotic disease, meaning that it is communicable from animals to humans – and humans can become infected with Salmonella from sick horses.<sup>1</sup>

## Salmonella spreads very easily, common routes of infection include:

- Horse to horse – some horses can transmit the bacteria even if they have no signs of illness, and sick animals shed a large amount of bacteria in their faeces
- Fomite transfer – the bacteria can be transmitted on grooming equipment, stable tools and even people
- Foals can be infected from their mothers while nursing
- Some clinically well horses can carry Salmonella and shed bacteria in their manure, creating a reservoir for infection in the environment.

## The main sign of salmonella infection are:

- Diarrhoea
- Fever
- Colic
- Lethargy and inappetence

Foals are often more seriously affected and can get profoundly ill showing signs such as haemorrhagic (bloody) diarrhoea, septic arthritis. Affected foals can die within 24 – 48 hours.

## TREATMENT

The primary treatment for Salmonella infection is fluid therapy and good supportive care. These horses are often severely dehydrated with electrolyte and acid/base disturbances.

**Even with intensive treatment, acute salmonellosis has a 50% mortality rate.**

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**Salmonella bacteria are very hardy and can survive for long periods in the environment, and active bacteria have been recovered from dried manure for up to 30 months.**

Prevention of overcrowding and strict hygiene are very important measures to assist in the prevention of salmonella infection.<sup>1</sup>

- **Isolation of any horses with diarrhoea**
- **Horses with diarrhoea should be handled last**, and people should disinfect all clothes and items used for sick horses each time they are used (eg feed and water buckets)
- **Foot baths** are a good idea to ensure manure is not tracked from sick horses to 'clean' areas
- **Thorough cleaning and disinfection** of any areas that have housed horses ill with Salmonella.

## PREVENTION

You can help protect your horses against diarrhea, septicaemia and polyarthritis by vaccinating with Equivac EST. The vaccination aids in the control of disease caused by Salmonella typhimurium, which is commonly responsible for Salmonella infection in horses.<sup>3</sup>

The vaccination does not completely eliminate the risk of horses becoming sick, however vaccinated horses are less likely to become sick, and if they do, they are likely to get a milder case of the disease.

## Vaccination protocols for Equivac® EST<sup>4</sup>

- **2 doses 4 weeks apart**, followed by annual boosters.
- **Pregnant mares should have boosters** no later than 6 weeks prior to foaling.
- **Foals should have 2 doses**, 4 weeks apart, followed by a 6 month booster, then annual boosters
- **Equivac® EST must be given by deep intramuscular injection**, preferably into the rump and is contraindicated for stallions and horses in training

1. The horse.com Salmonella in horses. [www.thehorse.com/128418/salmonella-in-horses](http://www.thehorse.com/128418/salmonella-in-horses). Retrieved on 10/8/21. 2. [www.health4horses.com.au/health-care/conditions/salmonella/salmonella.aspx](http://www.health4horses.com.au/health-care/conditions/salmonella/salmonella.aspx) retrieved on 10/8/21. 3. [www.health4horses.com.au/range/products/equivac](http://www.health4horses.com.au/range/products/equivac). Retrieved on 10/8/21. 4. Equivac® EST registered product label