



When it's mosquito season it's West Nile virus season.

The risk for horses continues throughout the country.¹

West Nile virus (WNV) is a costly and deadly disease that attacks the central nervous system of infected horses. Thanks in part to vaccination, incidence of WNV has dropped from more than 15,000 equine cases in 2002 to 468 cases in 2007.²

Treatment for horses infected with WNV is involved and expensive, often including:³

- Anti-inflammatory drugs
- Tranquilization and sedation
- Antibiotics for wounds
- Oral and IV fluid therapy
- Slings

How WNV spreads.

- Mosquitoes are infected after feeding on the blood of infected birds.
- Mosquitoes pass the virus to other birds and other animals, including horses and humans.



WNV transmission cycle

Common signs of equine WNV infection.^{3,4}

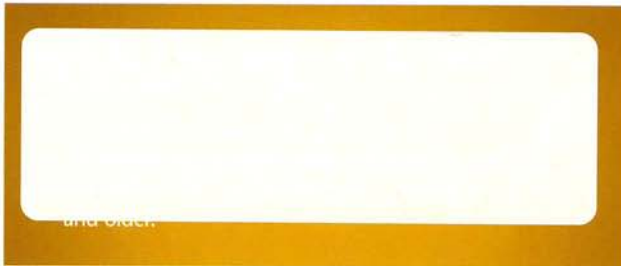
- Incoordination and stumbling
- Depression
- Excitability
- Muscle trembling
- Fever
- Death (about 1/3 of infected horses die)

What you can do to prevent WNV infection.

1. One of the most effective ways to prevent WNV infection in your horse is to reduce populations of adult mosquitoes throughout the season. This can involve using approved insecticides and eliminating standing water in mosquito-breeding areas.



2. Vaccinate your horse at the beginning of mosquito season.



If you have any questions about West Nile virus vaccination for your horse, contact your veterinarian.

Guidelines for vaccination of horses: West Nile virus. American Association of Equine Practitioners. Available at: <http://www.aaep.org/wmv.htm>. Accessed January 26, 2009.

¹United States Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. Available at: http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/nahss/equine/wmv/wmv_distribution_maps.htm. Accessed February 6, 2009.

²Merck Veterinary Manual. Ninth edition. 2005:1077-1081.

³Ostlund EN, et al. Equine West Nile encephalitis, United States. *Emerging Infectious Diseases* 2001;7(4):665-669.

⁴Siger L, et al. Assessment of the efficacy of a single dose of a recombinant vaccine against West Nile virus in response to natural challenge with West Nile virus-infected mosquitoes in horses. *American Journal of Veterinary Research* 2004;65(11):1459-1462.

⁵Data on file at Merial. Study 09-092.

⁶Data on file at Merial. Study 02-067.

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