

# Vaccination

## What to expect after your horse's vaccination.

Vaccines can save lives.<sup>1</sup> They are designed to stimulate an immune response — and, since your horse is unique, his specific response may be different from other horses.<sup>2</sup>

It's fairly common for horses to experience mild, temporary side effects following vaccination.<sup>3</sup> Any or all of the following symptoms may begin a few hours after vaccination:<sup>4</sup>

- Local muscle soreness or swelling
- Fever
- Loss of appetite
- Lack of energy or alertness

These signs are perfectly normal evidence that an immune response has been stimulated. In fact, most species (including humans) experience similar side effects following vaccination. But if any of these clinical signs persist for more than 24 hours, contact your veterinarian.

More serious side effects are rare, but can occur. They include types of allergic reactions that may lead to hives (urticaria); bleeding rash; difficulty breathing; colic; and even collapse (anaphylaxis).<sup>3,4</sup> These can be life-threatening, so you should contact your veterinarian immediately.

Your veterinarian understands your horse's unique lifestyle and disease risks — as well as how to handle and administer the vaccines that are appropriate for your horse's situation. Be sure to take advantage of this valuable knowledge resource if you have any questions about vaccination.

<sup>1</sup>MacAllister C, Gilliam L. Equine vaccination programs. Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service Publication VTMD-9119. Available at: <http://pods.dasn.okstate.edu/docshare/dsweb/Get/Document-2072/VTMD-9119web.pdf>. Accessed December 5, 2008.

<sup>2</sup>Merck Veterinary Manual. Ninth edition, 2005:2181.

<sup>3</sup>Adverse reactions. American Association of Equine Practitioners. Available at: [http://www.aaep.org/adverse\\_reactions.htm](http://www.aaep.org/adverse_reactions.htm). Accessed December 5, 2008.

<sup>4</sup>Povey RC and Carman PS (Martinod S). Technical basics of vaccination. In: Pastoret PP, Blancou J, Vannier P, Verschuereen C, eds. *Veterinary Vaccinology*. New York: Elsevier; 1997;15:574-578.