

Bacterial Diseases of the Horse - Strangles

STRANGLES

Strangles is a highly contagious upper respiratory infection in horses. The cause has been identified as a bacteria. The disease has a low mortality rate, yet the economic ramifications due to long recovery periods can be great. The disease is contracted through environmental contamination, nasal discharge, or direct contact with infected animals.

Clinical Signs

1. high fever of 103 to 106 degrees F
2. loss of appetite
3. a moist cough
4. clear nasal discharge that becomes yellow
5. difficulty in breathing and swallowing (as if strangling, hence the name)
6. swelling of submandibular lymph nodes that rupture.

This upper respiratory inflammation then spreads to the submandibular lymph nodes (below the jaw), which eventually abscess. Symptoms can range from minor to major. The most severe form of strangles involves inflammation of all lymph nodes.

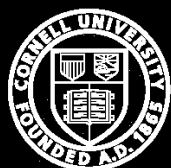
Treatment

Treatment consists of supportive care, which involves keeping the animal warm and dry, isolating it from other animals, and offering it soft foods. Hot packing of the abscesses speeds up formation of pus. The antibiotic of choice is penicillin if used before abscess development. Penicillin used after abscess formation slows recovery. Strangles is usually not fatal.

Prevention

There is a vaccination available for strangles, yet efficacy is low and the duration is short. The best prevention is to isolate new animals, optimally for a month. Any horses with upper respiratory signs should be avoided and/or watched closely for further problems.

This fact sheet was gleaned from material provided by the eXtension website (extension.org), which came from many sources and is for informational purposes only. It is not intended to be a substitute for personalized professional advice. For specific local information, contact your local county Cooperative Extension office, your veterinarian or other qualified professionals.



Cornell University
Cooperative Extension
Orange County

Agriculture
Family & Consumer Sciences
4-H Youth Development

18 Seward Ave., Ste. 300
Middletown, NY 10940
845-344-1234
Mon.-Fri., 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM
www.cce.cornell.edu/orange
Garden Helpline: 845-343-0664