

NYS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND MARKETS  
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FAST FACTS ABOUT  
**EQUINE INFLUENZA**  
(FLU)

**DEFINITION**

EQUINE INFLUENZA ("FLU") IS AN ACUTE, HIGHLY CONTAGIOUS RESPIRATORY DISEASE.

**CAUSE**

THE INFLUENZA VIRUS, *MYXOVIRUS A-EQUI* IS THE CAUSATIVE AGENT.

**CLINICAL SIGNS**

THE INCUBATION PERIOD IS 1-3 DAYS AND SIGNS BEGIN SUDDENLY WITH A HIGH FEVER. A DRY, HARSH COUGH BEGINS EARLY AND MAY LAST FOR WEEKS. NASAL DISCHARGE INITIALLY IS WATERY AND SCANT, BUT MAY BECOME YELLOW AND HEAVY, AND BREATHING DIFFICULTY MAY BE OBSERVED. DEPRESSION, LOSS OF APPETITE, AND WEAKNESS ARE COMMON.

**DIAGNOSIS**

THE CLINICAL SIGNS ARE PRIMARILY USED TO BASE THE DIAGNOSIS UPON. VIRAL ISOLATION FROM NOSE AND THROAT SWABS AND ANTIBODY LEVELS FROM BLOOD SAMPLES ARE DEFINITIVE.

**TREATMENT**

REST AND SUPPORTIVE NURSING CARE MAY BE ALL THAT IS REQUIRED; MEDICATIONS TO REDUCE FEVER AND ANTIBIOTICS IF FEVER LASTS MORE THAN 3-4 DAYS ARE HELPFUL.

**PROGNOSIS**

RECOVERY IN MILD CASES OCCURS WITHIN 2 WEEKS. COMPLICATIONS OF BACTERIAL INFECTIONS, CHRONIC BRONCHITIS, OR INFLAMMATION OF HEART MUSCLE CAN BE PREVENTED BY RESTRICTING EXERCISE, CONTROLLING DUST AND PROVIDING EXCELLENT VENTILATION.

**PREVENTION**

STRICT QUARANTINE OF ANY NEW ANIMALS BROUGHT ON THE PREMISES, IMMEDIATE ISOLATION OF SICK HORSES, AND VACCINATION, BEGINNING AT AN EARLY AGE.

**VACCINATION**

VACCINATION OF ALL HEALTHY HORSES SHOULD BE DONE AT AN EARLY AGE, WITH ADEQUATE BOOSTERING AND FREQUENT REVACCINATION (FREQUENCY DEPENDS ON FACTORS WHICH VARY FARM TO FARM).

-Dr. Lyda W. Denney-