

Preventative measures for Strangles.

Biosecurity measures for humans to follow.

- **Change foot wear or disinfect with solution (bleach water or specific chemical compound) when moving from one barn to another.**
- **Wash hands before contact with another horse.**
- **Change clothing/clean clothing before entering another barn with horses or contact with other horses.**

STRANGLES: The organism that causes strangles is a bacterium called *Streptococcus equi*. Transfer from horse to horse usually involves direct face-to-face contact or exposure of horses to such things as contaminated feed, water, hands, veterinary instruments or grooming tools. *S. equi* may survive in drinking water for up to four weeks. A stall or van recently used to house or transport a horse that is shedding the organism may also be a source of infection. One of the main factors contributing to the spread of a disease like strangles is the movement of horses, particularly those that no longer show clinical signs but still shed the organism in their nasal secretions. However, because the organism dies quickly in the environment, the usual source of infection is an infected horse.

Classic signs of the disease include sudden onset of fever as high as 106 degrees F, thick yellow nasal discharge, swollen lymph nodes under the jaw. When the infection involves lymph nodes above the airway, horses may cough stretch their heads out. Other signs include depression, poor appetite, loss of condition and foul smelling breath. The disease is typically milder in older animals, who may only show nasal discharge.

Prevention plays the largest part in the control of strangles. By identifying and isolating infected horses, practicing strict hygiene, and disinfecting equipment and facilities, an epidemic may be prevented. Testing of horses being moved within and between countries using fast but accurate diagnostic tests is also helpful. Proper selection and administration of vaccines is also important.

Horse owners, barn managers, and visitors to a barn can take steps to help prevent it from spreading and to lessen its severity:

- Keep sick and potentially sick horse separate from others. Treat sick/potentially sick animals last, followed by directly leaving the barn.
- Vaccinations animals.
- Sanitize equipment and don't share equipment.
- Minimize direct contact with other horses.
- Disinfect food and water containers before use, ensure stalls are disinfected between horses, minimize travel-related stress on your horse if possible. Limit use of a common stock tank.

Without control measures, a strangles outbreak will ultimately affect all susceptible horses, last longer, and have a greater chance of leading to complications.