

What is a vaccination amnesty?



We appreciate that it can be difficult to always remember when boosters are due and that there can be a number of factors that may result in vaccinations lapsing. For whatever reason, a horse's booster can often become significantly overdue, leaving them unprotected.

A vaccination amnesty is a way to get your horse's vaccination status back up to date at a reduced cost. For a limited period, we will offer both an initial vaccine and the second dose for the price of a single injection. Please note that the offer does NOT include any third dose of flu vaccine (if required). Horses will need to be over 12 months of age and be unvaccinated or have lapsed from their normal booster vaccination by more than three months.



What do the FEI and BHA recommend?

Riders or trainers who compete under the **International Equestrian Federation (FEI)** or **British Horseracing Authority (BHA)** (formerly The Jockey Club) rules have to ensure their horses' vaccinations are up-to-date to enable them to compete. Most competitions do not permit vaccination within seven days of the event.

BHA Rules

The BHA rules stipulate that a horse must have two primary vaccinations against 'flu' given no less than 21 days apart and no more than 92 days apart. In addition, where sufficient time has elapsed subsequent to the primary vaccinations, the vaccination section of the passport must be completed to show that:

- A horse has received a booster vaccination given no less than 150 days and no more than 215 days after the second component of the primary vaccination, and
- A horse has received booster vaccinations at intervals of not more than a year apart or such lesser time as the Stewards of BHA may, in an emergency, decide

FEI rules

Horses competing in FEI competitions require a primary course, with a third vaccination within 7 months of the second vaccination and then booster vaccinations at 6 month intervals, in accordance with BHA guidelines.

If you have any other questions...

We hope this leaflet answers most of your questions about the vaccination amnesty that has been offered to you. But if you have any other further questions, please do not hesitate to contact us. This information is brought to you by MSD Animal Health, manufacturers of Equilis Prequenza.

For more information, please contact your veterinary surgeon.



Why is it important to vaccinate your horse?

Just as with human disease, vaccination helps horses fight infection and if a horse does develop disease, it will decrease the severity of signs. Immunisation is most effective when a high percentage of the horse population is vaccinated (known as herd immunity). The fact that equine 'flu' epidemics are now quite rare is largely attributed to the success of vaccination.



What diseases are horses vaccinated against?

Equine Influenza

Equine Influenza is a highly infectious viral disease, which affects the respiratory tract and lungs. It is widespread throughout the horse population and spreads directly horse-to-horse or via contaminated people, tack or feed. It has also been demonstrated that influenza can travel some distance (up to 8km) by the wind. Therefore your horse does not need to leave your premises in order to become infected. Signs include a dry, harsh cough, fever, nasal discharge and lethargy. Following a bout of 'flu', horses will need complete rest for a prolonged period and secondary complications can develop, which require further rest and treatment.

Tetanus

All horses are at risk of tetanus. A horse doesn't even need to leave home to be at risk of picking up the infection. A small puncture wound can be all that is required for the bacteria to enter and in most cases the disease proves fatal despite attempts at treatment.

It is extremely unpleasant to witness and is usually fatal. It is caused by bacteria found in soil and horse droppings, which enter the body through wounds or punctures in the hoof. Horses will develop muscle stiffness resulting in a "rocking-horse" stance and "lock-jaw". If the horse survives tetanus, treatment is likely to be intensive, prolonged and extremely costly.

Horses can also be vaccinated against a number of other diseases including strangles, however this is not part of the vaccination amnesty. Please contact your practice for more information about this.

Why are booster vaccinations required?

Vaccines stimulate an immune response in horses by tricking their bodies into believing that they are being attacked by a disease and creating antibodies and killer cells to fight infection. This means that when natural infection does occur, the immune system is able to produce a much faster and stronger response. It is this strong response, as a result of vaccination, that prevents the disease becoming debilitating and spreading to others. But this protection does not last indefinitely and will gradually fall, leaving your horse at risk. Your horse's immunity therefore needs "topping up" at regular intervals. In the case of 'flu', after the third dose, revaccination is recommended every twelve months. In the case of tetanus, after the first booster, revaccination is recommended every 2 years.

