

Fact Sheet: Your Horse Has Salmonella But is Not Sick

Symptoms

Your horse has been found to be passing ("shedding") salmonella bacteria in its manure, but does not have any associated clinical problems (eg, diarrhea). Shedding of salmonella bacteria is quite common even among healthy horses. Situations associated with stress (eg, transportation, hot weather, surgical procedures, exposure to antibiotics) make shedding more likely. Horses with a previous or recent history of intestinal disease (eg, colic, diarrhea) are at high risk of salmonella shedding. It is unlikely that your horse will experience any health problems related to this episode of salmonella shedding.



Reducing Risks

Because salmonella can cause diarrhea and illness in horses, other animals, and human beings (especially children, senior citizens, or those with problems affecting the immune system), we suggest a few prudent measures (below) to reduce the risk of infection to other animals or people in contact with your horse. These measures should be continued for 6 weeks after the horse returns home:

- Try not to subject your horse to stressful experiences. Hard exercise, long-distance transportation, competition of any sort, and elective veterinary procedures should all be avoided.
- Ensure that other horses do not come in contact with manure from this horse. This may mean keeping the horse in a separate paddock, cleaning its stall with separate or disinfected tools, and properly disposing of the manure
- Wear disposable gloves when working with the horse. Carefully wash your hands when you are finished. Minimize contact between this horse and children.

At the end of the 6-week period, you may have your veterinarian culture the feces for salmonella to ensure the shedding has stopped. Up to 5 such cultures may be performed over a period of several days to confirm that the horse is not shedding. In the unlikely event that these cultures show that your horse is still shedding salmonella, please contact your veterinarian at UF at (352) 392-4700 ext 4000.

Surveillance

Our Alec P. and Louis H. Courtelis Equine Teaching Hospital has one of the highest equine caseloads of all teaching hospitals in the United States. Because we run a state-of-the-art hospital, we are dedicated to providing the best veterinary care possible to our patients. As part of our veterinary services, we run an infection control program to control and prevent infections in our patients during hospitalization. The main goal of this program is to develop an early warning system for detection of disease causing organisms and help prevent the potential spread of disease. This surveillance system entails performing bacterial cultures on samples from patients, animal housing areas, and personnel who have direct contact with patients. A primary concern is for infectious organisms passed in manure (eg, salmonella).