



## Advice for Horse Owners During the Equine Influenza Outbreak UK 2026

### Clinical signs – what owners should look out for

Clinical signs of equine influenza (EI) include respiratory signs such as coughing, nasal discharge and increased respiratory rate. General signs of illness such as dullness or inappetence may also be noted.

Both vaccinated and unvaccinated horses can be infected with EI but the clinical signs and the shedding of the virus will be reduced in vaccinated horses, as their immune system is better equipped to deal with the infection.

The virus will spread rapidly through unvaccinated horses and has an infection rate close to 100%.

Check your horses twice a day for the following signs:

- Snotty discharge from one or both nostrils (clear, white or any other colour)
- Coughing
- Fever – temperature above 38.5 degrees Celsius
- Dullness
- Inappetence

| Table of Clinical Signs of Equine Influenza                                                             |                                                                                                                            |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Unvaccinated Horses</b>                                                                              | Harsh, dry cough<br>Fever (temperature above 38.5 degrees Celsius)<br>Nasal discharge (can be clear, mucous-like or white) |
| <b>Partially Protected Horses</b><br>(due to irregular vaccination or use of out-dated vaccine strains) | Mild-moderate signs<br>Coughing<br>Nasal discharge                                                                         |
| <b>Vaccinated horses</b>                                                                                | Very mild signs<br>Shed less virus                                                                                         |

### White Lodge Recommendations on Vaccinations During the Outbreak

We recommend to vaccinate your horses against equine influenza. Horses require a primary course of 3 vaccinations and then a 6 monthly or annual booster.

| Equine Influenza Vaccination Protocol |                   |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|
| First Vaccination                     | Day 0             |
| Second Vaccination                    | 21-60 days        |
| Third Vaccination                     | 120-180           |
| Booster                               | Every 6-12 months |

**If your horse has not had a booster vaccine within the last 6 months, we advise giving a 6-month booster vaccination now to improve immunity during the virus outbreak.**



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### **Spread of Equine Influenza Virus**

There are 3 routes of virus spread:

1. Airborne - when an infected horse coughs, droplets are released into the air and can travel up to several kilometres
2. Direct contact between infected horses
3. Indirectly – when the virus is spread via infected droplets or nasal discharge on clothes, equipment, transportation vehicles or inappropriately cleaned and disinfected stables between horses

The incubation period (time between becoming infected and the onset of signs) for the disease is between one and five days.

### **Prevention of Spreading Equine Influenza Virus**

The following precautions are recommended:

- Stop unnecessary travel
- Prevent movement on and off the yard
- Do not share equipment such as tack, mucking out equipment, water and feed buckets
- Ensure each turn-out group has their own source of water
- Prevent horses in different turn-out groups touching over fences
- Wash hands regularly and change clothes, particularly if handling different groups of horses
- Take temperatures twice daily
- Monitor for respiratory signs
- Isolate any new horses, away from the other horses on the yard, for at least 2 weeks
  - Specific equipment should be used for the isolated horse
  - Clothes should be changed after handling the isolated horse
  - Wear gloves and wash hands after handling the isolated horse

If you have any further questions regarding the EI outbreak, please contact us at White Lodge Veterinary Clinic ([equine@whitelodgevetclinic.co.uk](mailto:equine@whitelodgevetclinic.co.uk) or 01643 703649 option 2)