

Capitol Equine Veterinary Services PC

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Dear Clients,

I have received numerous questions from concerned clients regarding equine herpes virus. I hope this short letter answers some of your own concerns. I encourage you to get informed about this disease through the publications and links below. On your quest for information, or on daily scans through email, twitter, facebook and google PLEASE keep in mind your source for the information. While I encourage you to become educated, I frown upon mass panic!

Here are the facts as we know them today: several western states have confirmed cases of EHV-1 (Equine Herpes Virus). Currently, 10 California Cases of Equine Herpes Myeloencephalopathy have been confirmed. ALL confirmed cases in California have been linked back to exposure during a cutting horse show in Ogden, Utah in late April through early May. Meaning currently, there is no evidence this virus has spread outside of the group of horses that competed at the National Cutting Horse Associations' Western National Championships in Ogden. This information can change daily, and I encourage you to visit the California Department of Food and Agriculture website for daily updates:

http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/ahfss/animal_health/equine_herpes_virus.html

What does this mean for you? Obviously all of my clients have different exposure, making each of your inherent risks' different. As a general statement, my current recommendation is the following: Limit the movement of horses and large gatherings to that which necessary. The less exposure your horse has to other horses, the lower their risk. If you have traveled to an event with a confirmed case please follow the quarantine guidelines given on the CDFA websites listed above. In addition if you find yourself among groups of horses or traveling I strongly encourage you to practice good/strict hygiene--ie) washing hands, no sharing of tack/bit/buckets/water/trailers all of the things we should do daily to limit the spread of viruses and bacteria. With that said, over the next several weeks the extent of this outbreak will reveal itself and allow us to make adaptations at that time.

One other major question I would like to address is vaccination: It needs to be understood that there is no vaccine available on the market that protects against EHV-1 Myeloencephalopathy. It has been reported that vaccinating with an EHV vaccine can help decrease viral shedding during an outbreak (ie your vaccinated horse can come down with the disease but the amount of virus it sheds causing others

to become ill may be reduced). You should also be aware that EHV vaccination elicits a short anti-body response of approximately 90 days so re-vaccination every 3-4 months is the only way to keep anti-body response high.

I have attached an additional document-- The Horse Report from 2007 that covers information that was released 4 years ago during an outbreak.

If you have any specific questions or concerns please feel free to call or email at any time.

Sincerely,

Sara Bartholomew, DVM