



EQUINE VETERINARY SERVICES

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Practice Policy for the Examination and Treatment of Horses that have NOT been Vaccinated Against Hendra Virus

Hendra Virus infection can be fatal for both horses and humans.

The clinical signs of Hendra Virus infection can closely resemble several other common equine disorders such as colic, respiratory distress, and nervous signs.

Since November 2012, it has been possible to vaccinate horses against this deadly disease. Vaccination not only protects the horse, **but also any person coming into contact with the horse.**

If horse owners wish their veterinarians to continue to examine horses that are showing signs of clinical diseases that could be associated with Hendra Virus (even though they frequently are not), then they have a responsibility to protect their veterinarians by having their horses vaccinated.

No veterinarian at Equine Veterinary Services will be expected to carry out a clinical examination of, or treatment for, **an unvaccinated horse** in circumstance where they believe that, by doing so, they would be putting their own lives, or the lives of their staff and other handlers, at increased risk of contracting this deadly virus. Each case will be judged on its own merits, and any intervention provided will be entirely at the discretion of the attending veterinarian, who has a duty of care not only towards the sick horse, but also towards himself and any persons coming into contact with the animal.

Horse owners should also be aware that equine specialist and referral centres will not see or admit unvaccinated horses that are exhibiting any clinical signs consistent with Hendra Virus infection. Please note that most cases of colic fall into this category as colic is a common presenting sign of Hendra virus infection. Ruling out Hendra as a diagnosis by the submission of laboratory samples can take up to 48 hours.

By not vaccinating your horses, you are putting their lives at risk, not only from the deadly Hendra virus, but also from failing to receive timely and appropriate treatment in such circumstances where a differential diagnosis of Hendra virus may exist.

Please vaccinate your horses today.

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