

EQUINE HERPES VIRUS (EHV) NOTICE

As we are sure some of you are aware that there has been a recent outbreak of Equine Herpes Virus (EHV) at the Valencia Show Jumping Spring Tour in Spain. There has now been a small number of confirmed cases of the virus in the UK.

EHV is a highly contagious airborne disease. The disease causes respiratory disease, pregnant mares to abort and neurological diseases dependent on the strain.

Clinical respiratory signs of the disease are very similar to those of equine flu;

- High temperature
- Nasal discharge
- A dry cough
- Loss of appetite
- Reduced performance
- Lethargy/depression

Certain strains of the disease can cause severe neurological problems. Strain EHV-1 causes horses to appear weak, may not be able to pass urine or droppings, may display signs of poor limb coordination (the hindlimbs are more usually affected) and in severe cases are unable to stand - these signs occur as the virus damages the spinal cord.

EHV is a contagious viral disease which can be spread via direct horse to horse contact, aerosol droplets over short distances (up to 5 metres) by coughing and snorting and indirectly by shared equipment such as tack, feed bowls and people via their hands and clothing.

Not all horses with EHV show the same signs, some may only show mild signs or if they are silently carrying the virus potentially no signs at all. A high temperature is often the first indicator that your horse is unwell.

If you notice your horse is showing signs of ill-health, isolate them and contact your vet immediately.