



## **Strangles and how it affects you if a horse is diagnosed on your yard**

Strangles is a common respiratory disease caused by streptococcal bacteria; it can result in coughing, a high temperature, nasal discharge, dullness, swollen glands in the neck and very occasional problems with breathing or even death.

The frustrating thing is although 99% get better from this disease horses can have any combination of the above signs so cases can be missed.

We know that some horses go on to become carriers where the bacteria inhabit the guttural pouches and these horses may show NO signs but intermittently shed bacteria into water troughs etc. and therefore even yards with strict procedures in place (i.e. isolation of all incoming horses for 3 weeks) can have cases of strangles popping up.

**Remember that in the first instance your own vet should be consulted with any queries. This information sheet is simply designed to answer some more frequently asked questions, but inevitably each particular situation is unique.**

*So, your horse is well but on a yard where there is a case of strangles?*

There is no legal obligation to do anything since the disease is not notifiable but in most cases your yard owner and their vet will have come up with a plan to limit spread within the yard and to the surrounding population of horses and you must stick to the rules they have put in place.

*What about visits from the farrier etc.?*

In horses that are not in the group that have been in contact with the infected horse it is may be acceptable for the farrier to visit but this should be discussed with the yard owner. Some farriers may choose to visit as the last call of the day and disinfect hands/boots equipment and change clothes before starting work again the next day. This is done at the farrier's own risk though and many farriers choose not to take the risk.

*Can horses hack past your yard?*

Neighbouring riders may choose to go on another route until the outbreak has passed but there is minimal risk of their horse contracting the disease as long as they stay out of contact with horses that are turned out.

*What about water troughs?*

We know that these can be source of infection, so it's a good idea to ensure these are either drained and scrubbed or fenced off during an outbreak so that clean buckets can be used if warranted.

*Do dogs spread it?*

Yes! We all know to wash hands and boots etc. but dogs can inadvertently spread the infection if they have free access through the whole yard.

*When can you go back to normal?*

Again it is different with different yards and you should stick to the plan that the vet/owner combination has come up with but if there are no new cases after the initial one then 3 swabs or two blood samples over a 3 week period can be enough to put your horse in the clear and ready to go out competing again. Please do ring us or your own vet for further advice and try not to worry too much. A vaccine against strangles is available on the market again and your veterinary surgeon can give you advice as to whether it is appropriate to use this at this time.