

# Hoof & Paw Newsletter

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## Update on Lyme Disease - Spring 2011

By Christina Rouse, DVM

### Do I Really Need to Worry About Lyme Disease?

Lyme Disease is a bacterial infection transmitted by ticks (most commonly the deer tick in our area): it



can infect many animals, including people, dogs and horses. Interestingly, Lyme disease has NOT been reported in cats!

Loudoun County has a large tick population and has become an endemic area for Lyme disease. ANY dog in our area can be at risk, even if they don't spend a lot of time outside

## Equine Spring Vaccines

By Shannon DeArmas, DVM

We are finally seeing the end of winter and the beginnings of spring. The horses are starting to shed and we can even leave the blankets off during the day. Now that spring is approaching we need to start thinking about those annual vaccines. This is the time of year when we get the horses caught upon their Eastern and Western Encephalitis and Tetanus vaccine. Tetanus is a bacterial disease that is started with puncture wounds most commonly. If this vaccine is given yearly, then we don't have to worry about those minor cuts and abrasions that our horses are known to get. It is still very impor-

or in wooded areas. In some cases, people or other pets can carry ticks into the home and serve as a source of infection for "indoor" dogs.

### What Are the Signs of Lyme Disease in Dogs?

Many infected dogs will show no outward signs of illness, and you may not even know your dog is infected until his annual blood test comes up positive. Other dogs, however, may show acute signs that typically resemble arthritis. Often we see "shifting leg lameness", meaning the dog may be sore or limping on one leg one day, then a different leg on another day. Some dogs will also develop fever, lethargy and loss of appetite. In severe cases, we can even see heart disease, central nervous system disorders and kidney failure.

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tant to contact the office about any serious puncture wounds to decide on further treatment. Encephalitis is a mosquito carried disease that we can't treat effectively, so routine vaccination is very important.

In the spring it is time for the semi annual flu/rhino vaccine. The diseases that are prevented with this vaccine are transmitted from horse to horse. Now that we are going to be traveling with our horses more, as the weather improves and the show seasons start, we need to make sure our horses are protected. It is always best to have the flu/rhino vaccine on board at least two weeks before any major events. When you are traveling

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### How is Lyme Disease Diagnosed?

At Hoof & Paw, we recommend annual Lyme testing on every dog, which is done in conjunction with your dog's heartworm test. (This test also checks for another, less common tick-borne disease called Ehrlichia.) If your dog is showing clinical signs for Lyme and the in-house test is positive, we will initiate treatment immediately (see below). If your dog is NOT showing any signs and the in-house test is positive, our next step is to send blood to an outside lab for a C6 Antibody test. This test quantitates your dog's current antibody level, which is believed to be correlated with the degree of infection. In an asymptomatic animal, the current recommendation is to consider treatment for any C6 level greater than 30. (If the level is less than 30, we recognize that at some point, your dog has been exposed to Lyme disease, but it is thought to be unlikely to develop a clinical problem at this time and treatment is not considered necessary.)

In most cases, we recommend rechecking the C6 level in

about 6 months to determine the efficacy of treatment (if given) or to monitor for increasing levels (if no treatment had been prescribed).

### How is Lyme Disease Treated?

In most cases, we recommend treating Lyme positive dogs with a one month course of an antibiotic called Doxycycline. If your dog is showing signs of lameness, we may also prescribe an anti-inflammatory. Individual cases may require additional therapy based on the severity of illness.

### What Can I do to Prevent Lyme Disease?

The best way to prevent Lyme disease is to keep your dog up to date on Lyme vaccines and to use monthly preventative.

We now have a new Lyme vaccine that targets two different antigens produced by the bacteria (versus our older vaccine, which only targeted one antigen). This newer vaccine is thought to offer more complete protection, and therefore make it less likely that a vaccinated dog will become infected. Of course, no vaccine is ever 100% effective, so using preventative and testing annually is still important.

If your dog has been vaccinated previously with our older vaccine, we will start the new vaccine at his next annual visit. To offer the most complete protection, the new vaccine should be boosted in 2-4 weeks with one of our technicians.

In terms of preventative, we recommend using a topical product such as Vectra or Frontline; every

month. These products are designed to either repel or kill the ticks such that they are not attached to your dog long enough to transmit Lyme disease. (Studies vary, but most people believe a tick needs to be attached and feeding for about 48 hrs. in order to transmit disease.)

### My Dog Has Already Been Treated for Lyme Disease. Do I still need to Vaccinate?

Previous studies suggested there was limited value in vaccinating previously positive dogs. However, the

more recent reports suggest there IS some value in continuing vaccines in these



dogs in that it will help prevent problems from any additional exposures. Thus, the current recommendation at Hoof & Paw is to start (or continue) Lyme vaccines even in previously positive patients.

\*Lyme Disease has become a significant problem in our area. It can be a very confusing disease and is an area of veterinary medicine that is under constant, ongoing research. At Hoof & Paw, we will do our best to keep you up to date on the latest research and protocols. Please do not hesitate to speak with any of our staff members or doctors if you have any questions—we're here to help!!



## Be Prepared for an Equine Health Emergency

If you own horses long enough, sooner or later you are likely to confront a medical emergency. From lacerations to colic to foaling difficulties, there are many emergencies that a horse owner may encounter. You must know how to recognize serious problems and respond promptly, taking appropriate action while awaiting the arrival of your veterinarian.

Preparation is vital when confronted with a medical emergency. No matter the situation you may face, mentally rehearse the steps you will take to avoid letting panic take control. Follow these guidelines from the American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP) to help you prepare for an equine emergency:

1. Keep your veterinarian's number by each phone, including how the practitioner can be reached after hours.
2. Know in advance the most direct route to an equine surgery center in case you need to transport the horse. (Marion duPont Scott Equine Medical Center, Leesburg.)
3. Post the names and phone numbers of

nearby friends and neighbors who can assist you in an emergency while you wait for the veterinarian.

4. Prepare a first aid kit and store it in a clean, dry readily accessible place. Make sure that family members and other barn users know where the kit is. Also, keep a first aid kit in your horse trailer or towing vehicle, and a pared-down version to carry on the trail. First aid kits can be simple or elaborate. Here is a short list of

essential items:

Cotton roll  
Cling wrap  
Gauze pads  
Sharp scissors  
Thermometer  
Surgical scrub and antiseptic

solution

Latex gloves  
Saline solution  
Stethoscope  
Digital timer  
Dermachloric Rinse

Many accidents can be prevented by taking the time to evaluate your horse's environment and removing potential hazards. Mentally rehearse your emergency action plan. In

an emergency, time is critical. Don't be concerned with overreacting or annoying your veterinarian. By acting quickly and promptly, you can minimize the consequences of an injury or illness. For more information about emergency care, ask your equine veterinarian for the



"Emergency Care" brochure, provided by the AAEP in partnership with Educational Partner Bayer Animal Health.

In an effort to provide the best care possible to our clients, we have put together a First Aid Kit which contains everything listed in this article plus more. It can be ordered by calling the office at (540) 338-5888, at a cost of \$43.95



## Humane Society of the United States not as good as you may think!

New ratings from Charity Navigator, an independent charity evaluator, show a downgrade for the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS). "Charity Navigator now gives HSUS a lower level of trustworthiness than the notoriously radical People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA)," The Center for Consumer Freedom points out in a press release. The Center for Consumer Freedom points to this as evidence that HSUS "is not adequately fulfilling its stated charitable purpose." "HSUS's 2008 tax filing shows that the group spent less than one percent of its collected donations on grants to hand-on pet

shelters. It put five times as much into its executive pension plan during that year." the Center for Consumer Freedom says. David Martoskio, CCF'S Director of Research and the editor of [HumaneWatch.org](http://HumaneWatch.org), release the following statement on HSUS's new ranking:

- Charity Navigator's downgrading of the Humane Society of the United States and its international arm sends a clear message: Animal charities can't stuff donor dollars away in pension plans, shortchange pet shelters, and expect that no one will notice.
- HSUS raises tens of millions of

dollars a year from Americans who believe their money is trickling down to local pet shelters. Instead, their contributions fund a bloated staff of well-paid lawyers and lobbyists, PETA-style propaganda campaigns, and a hefty executive pension plan.

Reprinted from  
[www.aaep\\_discussion](http://www.aaep_discussion)

# Equine Deworming Schedule

(This schedule is not to be followed if you're using **Strongid C daily wormer**. Daily wormer users will deworm using Equell in June and again in December with Equimax )



Jan/Feb	<b>Strongid</b> Single Dose (4 weeks later use Quest )
Feb/Mar	<b>Quest</b> at a 3/4 dose (12 weeks later use Equell)
May/Jun	<b>Ivermectin</b> (Ivermectin +/- Praziquantel) (8 weeks later use Strongid)
Jul/Aug	<b>Strongid</b> Single Dose (4 weeks later use Quest)
Aug/Sep	<b>Quest</b> at a 3/4 Dose (12 weeks later use Equimax)
Nov/Dec	<b>Equimax</b> (Ivermectin/Praziquantel) (8 weeks later use Strongid)

Horses that are less than 500 pounds or less than 1 year old should not use Quest. Replace Quest with Strongid or Ivermectin. This schedule is safe for pregnant mares.

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with your horse to any new location, use your own equipment and limit the exposure to other horses.

Depending on your horses shot schedule, we now offer a combo vaccine that includes the vaccines mentioned above with the West Nile vaccine. This is a complete vaccine that reduces the amount of needle sticks and eliminates the one that goes up the nose; this will be a comfort to those of you who own a horse who has learned to dislike the intranasal flu/rhino vaccine. West Nile is also a mosquito transmitted disease that we can only control with annual vaccination.

The next group of annual spring vaccines is our combination of Potomac Fever and Rabies vaccine. Obviously we need to keep our horses protected from rabies which is always a fatal disease.

Most people when they think of a rabid animal think of the aggressive dog or raccoon; very few people realize that a horse can present with neurological symptoms similar to other less dangerous diseases. This kind of presentation is not the first thing that comes to mind, and people could expose themselves to rabies. Keeping your horse vaccinated will protect him and you. The other half of the vaccine is the Potomac fever which can cause a fatal colitis and toxic laminitis. The symptoms to watch for in this disease are going off feed, fever and diarrhea. The disease is most commonly seen in the summer. We start off vaccinating in the early spring and give another booster in the early summer to give the best protection against this devastating disease.

Another part of our spring veterinary visit, is our wellness exam. This is our opportunity to go over your horse and discover any underlying problems he may be having. This is your opportunity to mention any changes you have seen and have questions about with the veterinarian. We examine your horse's eyes, legs and mouth. We listen to their heart and lungs and provide you with a weight to monitor your horse's condition. Prior to getting any vaccinations, we take temperatures to make sure there are no signs of infection or disease. This wellness exam is a vital part of keeping your partner healthy and sound. Call the office to set up your annual spring checkup today!



## The LifeCentre

Veterinary Emergency & Specialty Care

165 Fort Evans Rd. NE \* Leesburg, VA 20176

(703) 777-5755 \* Fax (703) 777-9968

TLC is open 24/7, 365 days a year, holidays, evenings and weekends.  
Expert emergency and critical care for: **Dogs \* Cats \* Rabbits \* Ferrets \*  
Exotics \* Pocket Pets**

- 24-hour patient care \* Board-Certified specialists
- \* Leading-edge technology & diagnostics

Together with your family veterinarian, they are part of your pet's healthcare team.



**Directions:** From Purcellville, take Rt. 7 E. go through town, turn left on Fort Evans Rd. It is the last building on the right.

## Frederick Emergency Animal Hospital

434 Prospect Blvd. \* Frederick, MD 21701 \* (301) 662-6622 \* Fax (301) 662-0453

Hours of Operation: Mon-Fri: 7 PM—8AM Sat-Sun: 24 hours



- Brand new 6500 square foot facility with state-of the art medical and surgical services
- Frederick Veterinary Referral Group is co-located with the Frederick Emergency Animal Hospital
  - Veterinary Specialty Groups include:
    - Sugarloaf Surgical Referral, LLC—Internal Medicine

**Directions:** From Purcellville: Take Rt. 7 E, turn left at Rt. 287 (Berlin Pike), Continue on Rt17/Rt79, at the traffic circle, take the 2nd exit and stay on Rt17/Rt79, turn left at Burkettsville Rd./Rt. 17. At the traffic circle, take the 2nd exit onto Rt17. Merge onto US 340, Continue on S. Jefferson St, Turn right at Prospect Blvd.



## Equine Emergency Numbers

**Emergency Policy:** Call (540) 338-5888, follow instructions. Since we share "on call" emergencies with Broad Run Veterinary Service, you may be instructed to call them. If you do not hear from the doctor within 20 minutes, please call Dr. Horne (540) 338-7568 or her pager (703) 443-4400 or Denise at (540) 550-3397 or (540) 869-9570.

