Biosecurity means doing everything you can to reduce the chances of an infectious disease being carried onto your farm by people, animals, equipment, or vehicles, either accidentally or on purpose.

APHIS photo by R. Anson Eaglin.

Showing Your Horse

- Use your own trailer. Don't ship your horses with horses from other farms.
- Ship only in a trailer that has been cleaned and disinfected. If you can "smell horse" in the empty trailer, it has not been cleaned and disinfected properly.
- Don't let your horse touch other horses, especially nose to nose.
- Don't share equipment (e.g., water, feed buckets, brushes, or sponges).
- Wash your hands, especially after helping other people with their horses.
- Don't let strangers pet your horse, especially those with horses at home or people who have been out of the country in the past 2 weeks.
- Before leaving the show grounds, clean and disinfect tack, boots, equipment, and grooming supplies. Brush off dirt or manure; then disinfect (spray or wipes are easy to take with you).
- When you get home, shower, blow your nose, and put on clean clothes and shoes before going near other horses.

Visiting Other Farms, Horse Shows, or Auctions

- Have a pair of shoes or boots that you save for visiting and don't wear around your own horse.
- Wear plastic shoe covers. Plastic bags from newspapers work well.
- If you are going to be working with horses on another farm, wear coveralls or plan to change clothes before returning to your horse.
- If there are farms you visit all the time and you can't change clothes and shoes, be sure their vaccination program and biosecurity practices are as good as your own.

USDA photo by Bill Tarpenning.

For Visitors to Your Farm or Horse

- It is best to have only one way into your farm. Mark this as the main entrance.
- Park away from the horses. Doing that will help keep disease-carrying organisms from being tracked from car floors or tires to your horses.
- If the farrier or veterinarian needs to park closer, be sure their tires and shoes have been disinfected.
- Ask all visitors to wear clean clothes and shoes. Give visitors plastic shoe covers, or brush dirt off their shoes and spray them with disinfectant.
- If you have many visitors, such as at a farm tour or open house, make a footbath for them to walk through.

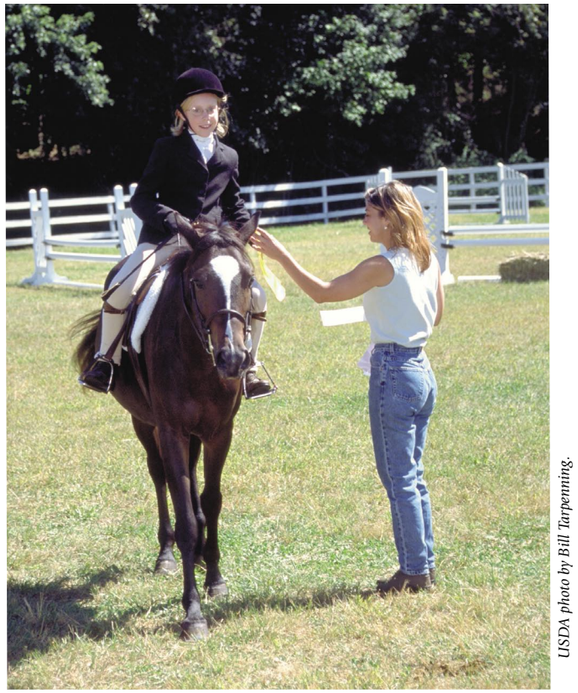
Bringing Horses Back From a Show

- If one horse has been shown, all your horses need to be vaccinated. Horses that show can bring home germs. Discuss what vaccinations the horses need, and how often, with your veterinarian.
- If possible, keep horses which were off the farm isolated for at least 2 weeks. Make sure there is no nose-to-nose contact.

Bringing in New Horses

This is the most likely way for infectious diseases to come in.

- Keep every new horse isolated for 30 days. Don't use pitchforks, grooming tools, or feed and water buckets on any horse but the new one. Mark these with red tape, or use red brushes, etc., only for the isolation area.



USDA photo by Bill Tarpenning.

- Work with the isolated horse last each day. Alternatively, wear boots and coveralls when working with the isolated horse and remove them before working or going near other horses. You can keep these in a plastic-covered tub near the horse.
- Always wash your hands and blow your nose after working with the new horse. You could carry germs to your other horses in your nose.

You Are the Best Protection Your Horses Have

Using Disinfectants

How To Disinfect
Surfaces must be clean for disinfectants to work. Brush off loose dirt and manure. If possible, wash the item with detergent first (laundry or dish soap works well) and then use a disinfectant. Most grooming tools can be dipped in disinfectant. Tack can be wiped with a disinfectant wipe or a disinfectant-dampened cloth. Shoes can be brushed or scrubbed off and then sprayed with disinfectant.

Examples of Disinfectants
Household Bleach—Mix ¾ cup of bleach per gallon of water. If you don't have a measuring cup handy, you can mix 1 part bleach to 10 parts water. This formula works for shoes, grooming equipment, buckets, shovels, and pitchforks. When you use bleach, make sure all dirt and manure have been cleaned off first.

Spray Disinfectant—Be sure the label says it kills bacteria and viruses. Sprays can work well on shoes, grooming equipment, and tack. Try to remove all manure and dirt before spraying.

Waterless Hand Sanitizers—They come in gels or hand wipes. These are good for use at a show or after visiting other horses. Be sure to work the cleaner all through your fingers and under the nails.

Other Disinfectants—Always mix and use according to the label. Two examples are One Stroke Environ® (available from Steris Corporation) and Tek-trol® (from Bio-Tek Industries). These both work well even if there is a little manure or dirt left on the surface. These are good choices for disinfecting trailers and car tires, and they also work well in footbaths.

Note: Trade names used in this publication do not constitute an endorsement, guarantee, or warranty of these products. USDA bears no responsibility resulting from the use of the described products. These procedures are not guaranteed to prevent highly contagious diseases from affecting your horses; however, they will reduce the risks.

APHIS file photo.

Making an Easy Footbath

You will need:

1. A low plastic pan or bin, wide enough to fit an adult's foot, shallow enough to step into easily
2. A plastic doormat (the "fake grass" mats work well)
3. A disinfectant that works when manure or dirt is present, such as Tek-trol or One Stroke Environ
4. Water

Mix the disinfectant with water following label instructions. Put the doormat in the plastic pan. Add disinfectant so that the bottom of the "grass" is wet. Ask visitors to walk through the footbath, wiping their feet on the mat. The "grass" scrubs their shoes a bit as they wipe them, and applies the disinfectant. When the liquid starts to get dirty, empty it and put in new disinfectant.

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