

# IDENTIFY ILLNESS EARLY

Know the signs of a sick horse.

Exhibitors should contact their veterinarian if their horse is showing signs of illness.

Horses that may be ill should not travel to events or shows.

## SIGNS OF AN ILL HORSE

### General:

- Drainage from eyes
- Fever
- Depression
- Weakness
- Lethargy
- Loss of appetite

### Respiratory:

- Nasal discharge
- Cough
- Head/neck extended
- Difficulty breathing

### Gastrointestinal:

- Colic
- Diarrhea
- Food coming out of nose or mouth

### Skin:

- Blisters or sores
- Circular areas of hair loss

### Neurological:

- Behavioral changes
- Sudden loss of vision
- Lack of coordination
- Inability to rise
- Seizing
- Head bobbing
- Swaying



## VITAL SIGNS

For a healthy 1,200 lb. horse at rest.

Rectal Temperature	99.5 - 101.5° F
Pulse	30 - 42 beats/minutes
Respiration Rate	8 - 16 breaths/minute

# KEEP IT CLEAN

Remember: hands, clothes, and boots can carry germs. Keep them clean and wash them frequently.

Avoid sharing tack or equipment including water and feed buckets, brushes, sponges, bits, etc.

If you do share, remember to wash and disinfect the item before using it on your horses.

Bring in fresh bedding for your stalls and sanitize areas where horses make nose contact, such as bars and doors.

Wash your trailers and vehicles regularly, especially after attending an event or show.

Regularly clean show equipment. Clean tack prevents disease and looks nice in the show ring!

## SEPARATE FOR SAFETY

Avoid nose-to-nose contact with horses from other farms.

Don't use shared water troughs or buckets.

Isolate horses returning from events or shows for two weeks, if possible, and monitor their temperature.

## BIOSECURITY IS KEY

Biosecurity is a set of management practices that work to prevent horses from coming in contact with germs that cause illness.

It's essential, for the protection of your horse, to practice proper biosecurity at events or shows.

At events, horses often have more contact with other horses of unknown health and vaccination status. Additionally, they are more likely to be stressed from travelling and a new environment, both of which are ideal conditions for disease spread.

Biosecurity is the key to enjoying your show season and keeping your horse healthy!

**“Michigan horse owners have a responsibility to do their best to prevent disease through vaccination and proper biosecurity. Owners should work with their veterinarian on what vaccines may be the best for their animals.”**

**- Dr. Nora Wineland, State Veterinarian**

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Michigan Department of  
Agriculture and Rural  
Development's  
Equine Disease Program

800-292-3939

P.O. Box 30017  
Lansing, MI 48909



[www.michigan.gov/equinediseases](http://www.michigan.gov/equinediseases)



# Equine Biosecurity

## FOR EXHIBITORS