

# Equine Newsletter

Urgent Care Update Re: COVID-19



## Central Ontario Veterinary Services

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## Vaccinations Are Now Considered Urgent Procedures

In support of our Country's effort to curb the spread of COVID-19, and in compliance with the Province of Ontario's COVID-19 Emergency Order, Central Ontario Veterinary Services is providing essential emergency and urgent care, while maintaining biosecurity and physical distancing from our clients and barn staff on our calls.

As the year moves on, the urgency to perform various preventive health measures changes, as the seasonal risk of disease changes.

In order to provide our horses with protection in time for the anticipated risk period, **Central Ontario Veterinary Services is now making appointments for West Nile Virus (WNV) and Eastern Equine Encephalomyelitis (EEE) vaccination.** Vaccination against Rabies, Tetanus, and Equine Influenza will also be given to horses that are due or overdue for these vaccines. Of greatest concern are horses that are being vaccinated for the first time, and horses whose vaccination history is unknown or uncertain, as these will require vaccination boosters. Horses who have been properly vaccinated in the past require a single annual vaccination.

The first cases of EEE are typically seen in Ontario horses in mid- to late July, with the first WNV cases occurring a week or two later. Both these diseases regularly occur in Simcoe County and the District of Muskoka, as well as in most other counties and districts in Ontario. Studies have shown that it can take over 10 weeks for maximum antibody levels to develop following first-time vaccination against West Nile Virus. Experience in endemic areas has shown that while antibody levels (titres) persist for up to 1 year following vaccination against WNV and EEE, protection declines faster than antibody level. Revaccination before titres have declined is therefore necessary to protect horses from infection, disease, and death.

In areas such as Ontario, where the risk is seasonal, vaccination is recommended one to two months prior to the risk period. Vaccination done in May and June should protect horses for the duration of the risk period in Ontario.

West Nile Virus and Eastern Equine Encephalomyelitis virus are spread from birds to horses and people by mosquitoes. Both diseases affect the brain and spinal cord, causing death in 80% of EEE cases and 30% of WNV cases. Recovered horses may be left with a variety of neurological disorders, including abnormalities of gait and vision.

Please contact our office by email [info@centralontarioveter.com](mailto:info@centralontarioveter.com) or at **705-722-3232** to book your appointment. It is not necessary for you to attend the appointment, as our COVID-19 procedures mean that one of our technicians will be assisting the veterinarian, and we request that only essential staff be present. If your horse is boarded at a stable that is currently closed to owners, please ask the stable management to have your horse in a stall for us at the time of the appointment.

For more information on our COVID-19 biosecurity procedures, please see our website. [www.centralontarioveter.com](http://www.centralontarioveter.com)

