

## The Cost of Not Vaccinating

*Investing in the initial cost of vaccines may save thousands of dollars in the long run*



**DULUTH, Ga. (March 13, 2023)** — Horse ownership is well known to be an expensive venture. The costs associated with feeding your horse, routine farrier visits, veterinary care and all of the necessary equipment for horse and rider can add up quickly. Depending on your goals and interests there may be additional costs such as taking lessons, trail riding park fees, horse show entry fees, maintaining a truck and trailer and fuel cost. It's not uncommon for horse owners to look for ways to reduce their out-of-pocket expenses and make their hobby more affordable. While horse owners may consider skipping vaccinations as a way to capture short-term savings, veterinarians warn this risky practice can result in even more costs down the line.

A horse that isn't vaccinated is at a higher risk of contracting a preventable disease such as equine influenza, West Nile Virus, eastern equine encephalitis and more. The cost to vaccinate your horse against these diseases, while it can vary from veterinarian to veterinarian, can roughly be estimated to \$65-\$100 twice a year, depending on what vaccines are recommended and the horse's vaccination plan. If a horse contracts a preventable disease, treatment can range anywhere from \$500 to upwards of \$2,000, depending on which disease is being treated and the severity of the clinical signs.

“Vaccinating your horses and sticking to a vaccination schedule is really the best way to save money in the long run,” explains Scott Hancock, DVM, Professional Services Veterinarian at Boehringer Ingelheim. “When you think about how much money is spent on these horses, why cut corners on vaccinations?”

When a horse contracts a preventable disease, it may look something like this: the horse begins exhibiting clinical signs and receives an examination from a veterinarian. The

examination, plus laboratory testing, may confirm what disease is causing the clinical signs. Depending on the disease, the horse may need to be quarantined away from other horses on the property or trailered to a veterinary clinic for treatment and observation.

“Typically, treatment will include palliative care with the main goal of keeping the horse comfortable as the disease runs its course,” says Dr. Hancock. “In an optimal situation, and depending on which specific disease we’re talking about, it would take the horse 10 to 21 days to recover.”

If a horse contracts a disease prior to or during a horse show, you may also lose entry fees and valuable experiences.

“All of that money goes down the drain if your horse gets sick and can’t go to the horse show or arrives at the show grounds only to get exposed to one of the ‘daycare’ respiratory bugs such as influenza or herpes,” says Dr. Hancock. “Add in the heartbreak of not being able to compete, the risk of the horse possibly infecting other horses and the cost of veterinary treatment, and you’re looking at a huge loss.”

Some diseases, such as eastern equine encephalitis, have a very poor prognosis for recovery. “To see a horse that’s dying of encephalitis because they weren’t vaccinated, knowing it could have been prevented, is very difficult to accept,” says Dr. Hancock. Diseases such as West Nile may respond to treatment but may have residual neurological issues that could also have been prevented with appropriate vaccination.

Vaccinating your horse has far more benefits than there are risks, both for the health of your horse as well as your wallet.

“There is no reason not to utilize the science of immunology to protect our horses, especially against diseases that are often terminal,” concludes Dr. Hancock. “Work with your local veterinarian to determine which vaccinations are appropriate for your horse and develop a strategic vaccination schedule.”

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As a global leader in the animal health industry and as part of the family-owned Boehringer Ingelheim, we take a long-term perspective. The lives of animals and humans are interconnected in deep and complex ways. We know that when animals are healthy, humans are healthier too. By using the synergies between our Animal Health and Human

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Boehringer Ingelheim Animal Health has deep roots in the U.S. From a start in St. Joseph, Missouri, more than 100 years ago, it has grown to encompass seven sites. Boehringer Ingelheim Animal Health's portfolio contains widely used and well-respected vaccines, parasite-control products and therapeutics for pets, horses and livestock including NexGard®, Heartgard®, Pyramid® + Prespense®, VAXXITEK®, Ingelvac CircoFLEX® and Prascend®.

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