

# Johnson Veterinary Clinic, L.L.C.

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## FOAL VACCINATION SCHEDULE

Foals are immunologically competent, but naïve. This means that their immune systems are fully functional and capable, just not adequately prepared. They are new to the world and as such have not been exposed to the pathogens and diseases they must fight off. The mare's colostrum (first milk) provides antibodies that protect the foal for a number of months, allowing time for the foal to be exposed and form his own antibodies. The trick to vaccinating a foal is to provide him with vaccines that will challenge his immune system to produce his own antibodies at a time when maternal antibodies have declined enough to not interfere with the vaccine, yet before they have declined to such a level that he is no longer safe. Because foals have a naïve immune system, they should receive a series of vaccines, two to three doses, each a month apart.

Mares should be vaccinated (all their shots boosted) during their tenth month of pregnancy. This provides a higher level of antibodies, and protection, in the colostrum. This higher level of antibodies takes longer to clear from the foal and a baby from such a well vaccinated mare would begin his shots at six months of age. The foal from a mare whose vaccines were not boosted during month 10 should start the same series of shots earlier, at four months.

### SIX MONTHS

- Tetanus, Eastern/Western Encephalitis
- West Nile
- Potomac Horse Fever
- Rabies

### SEVEN MONTHS

- Repeat above

### EIGHT MONTHS

- Repeat above

### NINE MONTHS

- Flu/Rhino
- Strangles

### TEN MONTHS

- Repeat above

### ELEVEN MONTHS

- Repeat above

\*\*\* A note about deworming foals: deworm every other month, as you would an adult horse, worming too often may decrease the foal's exposure to parasites, preventing the establishment of any natural immunity/protection