



Johnson Veterinary Clinic, LLC
North Lewisburg, OH 43060
(937) 747-3282

Fall Vaccines

What are “Fall” vaccines? First of all, the designation by season is not entirely correct – these should be thought of as the second half of your annual vaccines, and Fall is a reasonable time to give them. While many horses can handle receiving all of their vaccines at once, usually in the Spring, there are a growing number of horses and owners who recognize problems associated with such a heavy dose of vaccine in one day. Serious, life-threatening anaphylactic shock is very rare – more likely the complications we might see would be sore/stiff necks, a mild fever, lethargy and lack of appetite. We can lessen these complications by giving fewer vaccines – some in the Spring and some later in the year. Different veterinary practices may have different suggested vaccine schedules. Recommendations and needs will vary according to each horse/owner and their housing and performance situations.

Typically the Spring vaccines will be those that protect your horse from mosquito borne diseases, such as Eastern and Western encephalitis (Tetanus – arguably the most important vaccine – comes with these). We like to give influenza and rhinopneumonitis (herpes) with these in the Spring, boosting immunity before the busy riding and showing season.

Fall (second half) vaccines often are the Potomac Horse Fever (PHF) and Rabies vaccinations. PHF is a seasonal disease, with greater incidence in the late Summer and Fall. It makes sense to have a vaccine for PHF closer to its season of risk, giving the horse a higher, more protective titer when it needs it. Having said that, the PHF vaccine makes more sense as a late July and August vaccine than an October vaccine (remember, second half of vaccines, not necessarily Fall).

Rabies is recognized by the American Association of Equine Practitioners as a core vaccine, as important as tetanus. While rare, the rabies virus causes a usually fatal, highly contagious neurologic disease. This is one of the few diseases you can get from your horse. Vaccine protects your horse – and that helps to protect your family.

Each horse’s situation should be evaluated and an individual plan for vaccination created. We often recommend a second flu and rhino vaccine this time of year, especially for horses travelling amongst other horses, or that are housed with horses that travel. Young horses in mixed and changing populations might benefit from a strangles vaccination.

One important point to consider, especially for people administering their own vaccines – what was in your “5 Way”. There are many variations of combination vaccine products. Often West Nile is not included and it is an essential vaccine for your horse.