



Protecting Equine Facilities and Disinfecting Against Strangles

Protecting Facilities and Disinfecting Against Strangles

Strangles, a highly contagious bacterial infection that affects horses and other equine species. Strangles, caused by the bacterium *Streptococcus equi*, poses a significant threat to the health and well-being of horses and can lead to severe complications if not managed properly.

In this technical bulletin, we aim to provide you with essential information and guidelines for protecting your equine facilities and effectively disinfecting against strangles. By implementing the recommended practices, you can reduce the risk of transmission and minimize the impact of this infectious disease on your equine population.

Transmission:

Strangles is primarily transmitted through direct contact with infected horses or indirect contact with contaminated objects, such as tack, equipment, feed, or water troughs. The bacterium can survive in the environment for extended periods, particularly in humid conditions.

Clinical Signs:

The most common clinical signs of strangles include:

- High fever
- Nasal discharge, initially clear and then thick and pus-like
- Swollen lymph nodes (submandibular lymph nodes) under the jaw, which may abscess and burst, releasing thick yellow or white pus
- Difficulty swallowing or eating due to lymph node enlargement
- Coughing

Diagnosis:

A veterinarian can diagnose strangles based on clinical signs, history, and laboratory tests. Common diagnostic methods include physical examination, sampling of nasal discharge or abscess material for bacterial culture, and serological tests.

Treatment:

Treatment typically involves supportive care and appropriate antimicrobial therapy. Affected horses may require isolation, rest, proper nutrition, and the administration of antibiotics prescribed by a veterinarian. Abscesses may need to be lanced and flushed if they become large or cause significant discomfort.

Vaccination:

Vaccination can help reduce the severity and spread of strangles. There are different types of strangles vaccines available, including intramuscular and intranasal formulations. Consult with your veterinarian to determine the most appropriate vaccination strategy for your horses.

Biosecurity Measures:

- a. Isolation: Establish and maintain a designated isolation area for newly arriving or sick horses. This area should be physically separated from healthy animals to prevent the spread of infection.
- b. Visitor Protocols: Enforce strict visitor protocols, such as hand hygiene, disinfection of footwear, and appropriate protective clothing, for anyone entering the facility.
- c. Quarantine Period: Implement a mandatory quarantine period for newly arrived horses to monitor their health before integrating them with the resident population.
- d. Equipment and Supplies: Minimize the sharing of equipment and supplies between animals to avoid cross-contamination.



Identification and Monitoring:

- **Health Checks:** Regularly monitor all horses for signs of illness, including increased temperature, nasal discharge, coughing, and swollen lymph nodes.
- **Separation of Affected Horses:** Isolate and separate any horse displaying clinical signs of strangles immediately to prevent transmission to others.
- **Veterinary Involvement:** Consult with a veterinarian to confirm diagnoses, guide treatment protocols, and establish appropriate monitoring procedures.

Cleaning and Disinfection:

- **Removal of Organic Material:** Thoroughly clean all surfaces, equipment, and areas that may come into contact with horses or their secretions. Remove organic material, such as manure or bedding, before disinfection.
- **Appropriate Disinfectants:** Select a disinfectant specifically formulated to eliminate *Streptococcus*. Look for products containing active ingredients like quaternary ammonium compounds or other disinfectants demonstrating efficacy against streptococcus.
- **Disinfection Frequency:** Develop a routine cleaning and disinfection schedule, focusing on high-touch surfaces, shared equipment, stalls, and common areas.

- **Contact Time and Dilution:** Follow the manufacturer's instructions regarding contact time and appropriate dilution ratios for the chosen disinfectant.
- **Equipment Disinfection:** Clean and disinfect all shared equipment, including halters, lead ropes, buckets, and grooming tools, after each use.

Education and Training:

- **Staff Training:** Educate all staff members about strangles, its clinical signs, transmission routes, and proper infection control measures.
- **Awareness Among Horse Owners:** Provide information to horse owners about strangles, emphasizing the importance of responsible horse ownership, early detection, and isolation of sick animals.

Remember, prevention is the key to controlling the spread of strangles. By implementing rigorous biosecurity measures, closely monitoring your equine population, and practicing effective cleaning and disinfection protocols, you can safeguard your animal care facility and protect the well-being of your horses.

For specific guidance and recommendations tailored to your facility, we strongly advise consulting with a veterinarian experienced in equine health and infectious diseases.



Alpha Tech Pet, Inc.

25 Porter Road, Suite 210, Littleton, MA 01460

www.alphatechpet.com

(978) 486-3690 • Fax: (978) 486-3693