

# ***Viral diseases of the Horse***

## ***Rabies***

### **Rabies**

Rabies is a highly fatal, contagious disease that affects the central nervous system. The rabies virus is transmitted from animal to animal or animal to human through direct contact with saliva of an infected animal. This direct contact can be a bite wound or saliva entering an existing wound. In horses, a direct bite wound is the most common means of transmission. Domestic dogs and cats, along with skunks, foxes, raccoons, and bats, can carry the rabies virus.

### **Clinical Signs**

1. depression
2. incoordination
3. ataxia
4. colic
5. fever
6. loss of appetite
7. muscle spasms of the third eyelid
8. blindness
9. urinary incontinence
10. restlessness.

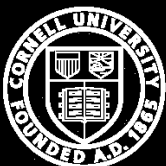
### **Treatment**

Rabies has an incubation period of two to nine weeks, but the incubation period may be as long as 15 months. Once onset of the disease occurs, it progresses rapidly, ending in death. Death can occur as quickly as in 12 hours but more typically will take three to five days.

### **Prevention**

The best prevention of rabies in horses is to properly vaccinate the animal once a year.

This fact sheet was gleaned from material provided by the eXtension website (extension.org), which came from many sources and is for informational purposes only. It is not intended to be a substitute for personalized professional advice. For specific local information, contact your local county Cooperative Extension office, your veterinarian or other qualified professionals.



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