



Equine Influenza: Complete Protection Guide

Equine influenza (horse flu) is a **highly contagious respiratory disease** that can spread rapidly through yards, events, and horse transport networks. This guide provides clear, practical information on **prevention, management, and biosecurity**—helping you protect individual horses and reduce risk across your entire facility.

What is Equine Flu?

Equine influenza is a **highly contagious viral respiratory infection** of horses. It targets the upper airways and can affect horses of any age, with outbreaks often occurring where horses mix—such as competitions, livery yards, sales, and during transport.

One of the biggest challenges with equine flu is its **rapid onset** and **high transmission rate**. Clinical signs typically appear **1-3 days after exposure**, and infected horses can shed (spread) the virus for several days—sometimes even as they begin to look brighter—making early recognition and strict biosecurity essential.

How Horses Contract Equine Flu

Horses contract equine influenza primarily through **airborne transmission** when infected horses cough or sneeze, releasing respiratory droplets that can be inhaled by nearby horses. The virus can also spread through direct contact and via contaminated people, equipment, and environments—especially where cleaning and disinfection are inconsistent.

The virus can travel remarkably far through the air—up to 5 kilometres (approximately 3 miles)—making it possible for outbreaks to spread between neighbouring facilities even without direct contact. This transmission range is a key consideration for biosecurity planning, particularly in areas with multiple yards, shared boundaries, or frequent horse movement.

- **Direct contact** – infected horses transmitting to healthy horses
- **Airborne spread** – respiratory droplets from coughing and sneezing
- **Contaminated handlers** – hands, clothing, and footwear carrying the virus
- **Shared equipment** – grooming kits, tack, and thermometers
- **Feed and water** – contaminated buckets and troughs
- **Transportation** – shared trailers and horseboxes
- **Facilities** – poorly disinfected stables and yards

Symptoms & Signs of Equine Flu 🌡️


Primary Symptoms	Description
🌡️ High fever (up to 106°F)	Rapid temperature elevation within 24–48 hours
😷 Dry persistent cough	Harsh, hacking cough lasting weeks
💧 Nasal discharge	Clear initially, may become thick and yellow
😞 Depression and lethargy	Reduced energy and alertness
🍴 Loss of appetite	Reduced feed intake and interest
💪 Muscle soreness	Reluctance to move, stiffness
🔍 Enlarged lymph nodes	Swelling under jaw and throat area

⚠️ **Important:** Symptoms typically appear 1–3 days after exposure. Infected horses can continue spreading the virus even after appearing clinically recovered, making isolation critical.

Prevention: Protecting Your Horse

Preventing equine influenza requires a multi-layered approach combining **vaccination**, **biosecurity**, and vigilant **monitoring**. The following measures are essential for protecting individual horses and reducing facility-wide risk.

1. Maintain a regular **vaccination** schedule with boosters every 6 months to support optimal immunity

 **Important: 6 monthly boosters provide a more effective protection - this has been shown in more recent studies, your horse is more likely to show clinical disease if their vaccination is after 6 months.**

1. Monitor horses daily for early signs of respiratory disease (especially fever and cough)
2. Implement strict hygiene practices for handlers, equipment, and facilities
3. Quarantine new arrivals for 14–21 days before introducing them to resident horses
4. Limit exposure during high-risk periods such as competitions, sales, and transport
5. Ensure adequate ventilation in stables and enclosed spaces

Preventing the Spread of Equine Flu

Once equine flu is suspected or confirmed, **immediate action** is critical to prevent spread throughout the facility and to neighbouring properties. Biosecurity protocols must be implemented **without delay**.

- Immediate isolation – separate sick or exposed horses for a minimum of 14–21 days
- Thorough disinfection – clean and disinfect all equipment, stables, and high-touch surfaces with Equine Bio Genie Disinfectant
- Minimize contact – restrict horse-to-horse contact and limit handler movement between groups
- Handler hygiene – implement strict handwashing, footwear disinfection, and clothing changes
- Effective disinfectants – use products proven to kill equine influenza virus
- Movement restrictions – avoid transporting horses on or off the property during outbreaks

Treatment & Management

Treatment for equine influenza is primarily supportive, focusing on rest, symptom management, and preventing secondary complications. Most horses recover within 2–4 weeks with appropriate care, though lung damage can occur in severe cases.

Care Plan Checklist

- Provide complete rest for a minimum of 3–4 weeks (commonly *1 week per day of fever*)
 - Ensure constant access to fresh, clean water to support hydration
 - Administer pain/anti-inflammatory medication, only as prescribed by your veterinarian
 - Monitor temperature twice daily and record findings
 - Watch for signs of secondary bacterial infection (worsening nasal discharge, persistent fever, increased breathing effort)
 - Use antibiotics only if prescribed for confirmed secondary infections, consult your veterinarian
 - Maintain strict isolation until fully recovered and cleared by your veterinarian
 - Avoid exercise or work until complete recovery is confirmed
 - Provide a dust-free environment with good ventilation to reduce airway irritation
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Top Tips on Equine Flu ★

- Vaccination is key – maintain a strict 6-month booster schedule for all horses
- Early detection saves lives – monitor daily for subtle changes in behaviour, appetite, and temperature
- Strict isolation works – separate sick horses immediately, before symptoms worsen
- Disinfection matters – use proven effective products on all equipment and surfaces
- Rest is essential – allow full recovery time before returning to work (minimum 1 week per day of fever)

Biosecurity is everyone's responsibility – train all staff and visitors on protocols and expectations








What Most People Don't Know About Equine Flu 💡

While equine influenza is well-known, some facts often surprise even experienced horse owners and managers.

- Horses can continue spreading the virus even after they appear clinically recovered, making post-recovery isolation essential

While equine influenza does not infect humans, maintaining biosecurity protects the entire equine community

Top Biosecurity Tips

Biosecurity Measure	Implementation Guidelines
 Quarantine Protocol	Isolate all new arrivals and exposed horses for 14–21 days minimum
 Equipment Hygiene	Clean and disinfect all grooming kits, tack, and tools between horses
 Handler Protocols	Wash hands thoroughly, disinfect footwear, change clothing between horse groups
 Facility Disinfection	Regular cleaning with proven effective disinfectants on all surfaces
 Movement Control	Limit horse-to-horse contact and restrict movements during outbreaks
 Visitor Management	Implement sign-in procedures and hygiene requirements for all visitors
 Temperature Monitoring	Check and record temperatures daily, especially during high-risk periods

How Equine Bio Genie Protects Your Facility 🏆

Equine Bio Genie provides comprehensive **biosecurity solutions** specifically designed for equine facilities facing the constant threat of infectious diseases like equine influenza. Our products are formulated with the unique challenges of horse management in mind, delivering effective protection without compromising safety.

Our disinfectant products are **proven effective** against equine influenza virus, providing the reliable protection your facility needs. From daily hygiene routines to outbreak management, **Equine Bio Genie** helps you maintain the highest biosecurity standards to protect your horses, staff, and business.

✅ **Equine Bio Genie Disinfectant Kills Equine Flu Virus – Protect your horses and facility with proven, effective biosecurity solutions designed specifically for equine environments.**

Equine influenza is a serious but preventable disease. With proper vaccination protocols, vigilant monitoring, strict biosecurity measures, and effective disinfection using proven products like Equine Bio Genie, you can significantly reduce the risk to your horses and facility. Protecting your equine community starts with the right knowledge and the right tools.
