



MORE INFORMATION ABOUT CONTAGIOUS EQUINE METRITIS

For more information on Canada's approach to contagious equine metritis, call the CFIA at

1-800-442-2342
or visit www.inspection.gc.ca



Canadian Food
Inspection Agency

Agence canadienne
d'inspection des aliments



Contagious Equine Metritis

What to expect if your animals may be infected

Canada 



Introduction

This brochure provides you with information about what happens if contagious equine metritis is suspected or confirmed in your horse.



About contagious equine metritis

Contagious equine metritis is a venereal disease in horses caused by the bacterium *Taylorella equigenitalis*. It is very contagious and can have devastating effects on breeding programs.

There is no human health risk associated with this disease.

In Canada, contagious equine metritis is a “federally reportable disease.” This means that all suspected cases must be reported to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) for immediate investigation.

Contagious equine metritis is spread during breeding. Horses can also contract the infection through

- contaminated instruments and equipment such as tail bandages, buckets, sponges and gloves, or
- artificial insemination.

Infected stallions can harbour the disease for years without showing any signs. In mares, initial exposure to the disease can result in a large amount of vaginal discharge 12 to 14 days following breeding with an infected stallion. The disease can cause infertility and, on rare occasions, abortion. The severity of signs in mares varies.

You should always maintain strict hygiene when handling stallions and breeding mares to prevent disease from spreading to other horses.

Controlling contagious equine metritis

All horses of breeding age (with the exception of geldings) that are imported into Canada from countries that are known to have this disease must be tested before entering Canada. After entry into Canada, both stallions and mares are quarantined, where they undergo further testing.

The CFIA takes immediate disease control actions in response to contagious equine metritis. While all disease situations are different, the steps for responding to a suspect case of contagious equine metritis normally include

- precautionary quarantine
- testing of exposed horses
- investigation
- treatment of infected horses

Precautionary quarantine

If this disease is suspected in any of your horses, a CFIA staff member (usually the district veterinarian) will visit the premises to meet with you. A precautionary quarantine may be placed on the premises, and you will receive a copy of the conditions of the quarantine. The CFIA representative will also answer any questions you may have.

Quarantines are necessary to control the potential spread of disease. Under the quarantine, no horses are allowed to enter or leave the property unless their movement is licensed by the CFIA.

While the property is under quarantine, you must

- adhere to any restrictions placed on the movement of horses on and off the property
- report any illness or death in your horses
- clean and disinfect any equipment that may have been used on an infected horse

Testing of exposed horses

Contagious equine metritis is suspected when

- mares that are bred by the same stallion experience short-term infertility and have vaginal discharge, or
- breeding records link back to a farm where contagious equine metritis has been diagnosed.

Laboratory testing is needed to confirm the diagnosis.



Investigation

If contagious equine metritis is confirmed, the CFIA will review your farm or stable records to identify any other exposed horses that could be at risk of infection. To help CFIA staff in their investigation, you may be asked to provide

- purchase, sale and show/racing records
- veterinary records and laboratory reports
- a detailed description of farm/stable management practices
- a map of the farm/stable
- contact information for your veterinary practitioner

All other exposed horses will also be tested as part of the animal health investigation.

Your cooperation and that of any other parties involved is critical to the success of the investigation and ultimately to the control of the disease.

Treatment of infected horses

In most cases, this disease can be successfully treated with disinfectants and antibiotics. While one course of treatment may be sufficient in a stallion, it may take several months before this disease can be successfully treated in a mare.

The horse may be used for breeding following treatment and testing to confirm it is no longer infected.

Cleaning and Disinfection

Before the quarantine can be removed, the process for cleaning and disinfection may include

- disposing of potentially contaminated materials
- cleaning and disinfecting hard surfaces and structures
- cleaning and disinfecting tools and equipment

The CFIA veterinarian will assist you in developing an effective cleaning and disinfection plan. Cleaning and disinfecting costs are your responsibility.

Removal of Quarantine

Once cleaning and disinfecting is complete the CFIA will evaluate your premises to determine when the quarantine may be removed.

Confidentiality

As directed by the *Privacy Act* and other federal statutes, the CFIA is required to protect private information collected from you. Any information you provide during a disease response situation is treated as confidential, unless otherwise indicated.



Questions or concerns?

If you have any questions or concerns related to the CFIA's disease response activities, please contact:

Name of CFIA representative: _____

Phone number: _____