



Protect Your Horse with Veterinarian-Administered Vaccinations

With vaccines readily available at farm supplies stores, online pharmacies and other retailers, it's sometimes tempting to save a few dollars by purchasing and administering them to your animals yourself.

Because there are hidden risks and costs associated with vaccinating animals yourself, "cheaper" vaccines aren't the value they first appear to be.

Did you know that many veterinarians will develop a customized vaccine program for your horse based on its environmental exposure and other factors? Coupled with other routine services and check-ups, having your veterinarian administer vaccines is always safer, easier and a better value in the long run than doing it yourself.

Having your horse on the correct vaccination schedule allows the veterinarian to observe the animal regularly and detect early signs of a disease or disorder. Based on these visits, your veterinarian can suggest other, more in-depth examinations or tests for your horse.

Here are several other good reasons why a veterinarian is your best choice for administering vaccines:

Proper Handling of the Vaccine

Many vaccines require special handling and storage. For instance, a particular vaccine may require protection from extremes of temperature or exposure to light to preserve its effectiveness. Rely on a licensed veterinarian to store and handle the vaccine properly. Another aspect of proper handling is also making sure that the vaccine has not passed its expiration date. Veterinarians are keenly aware of the effective life of a given vaccine.

Safe Administration

Part of safe administration is a clean environment and injection site, otherwise you may be putting pathogens into your horse's system instead of protecting against them.

Some vaccines cannot be given at the same time as other medicines. Your veterinarian will know which vaccines and medications can react with one another. Your veterinarian will document the vaccine's serial number and administration date—especially important in the event of a manufacturer's recall. This is one instance when poor documentation could put your animal in peril.

Availability for treatment of adverse reactions

Any injection can result in adverse effects. Maybe it's only mild swelling at the injection site. Or, it could be lethargy and a slight fever for one to two days. In some animals, it can be as severe as an immediate outbreak of hives or life-threatening anaphylaxis. If your veterinarian is there administering the vaccine, he'll know what to do to counteract a reaction—and he'll have the medicine to do it.

When you think about the risks of doing it yourself, it only makes good sense to have a licensed professional administer vaccines.

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