



March 31, 2021

It is with great sadness and concern that we must report that a grouping of our horses, located at W9323 Lake Shore Rd in Sharon, have contracted the Strangles Virus. We have vet confirmation that 7 of our horses have active cases of the virus and are extremely contagious to the community. Strangles is a bacterial infection of the respiratory tract that has been with us for close to 800 years by historical reports, likely longer. It is caused by a bacterium called *Streptococcus equi*.

Symptoms

The first symptom of infection is a high fever, which appears a few days to two weeks after the horse picks up the organism. This can easily be missed because no other symptoms have yet appeared. A thin, clear nasal discharge usually develops next, which changes rapidly to a thick, white/yellow consistency characteristic of pus. Swelling/edema starts to develop under the jaw and around the back of the jawbones. Lymph nodes enlarge to the point of obvious ball-shaped lumps between the lower jawbones. The area from the base of the ear and along the back of the jawbones also often swells. The interior of the horse's nose and throat are reddened from inflammation, and swallowing may be painful. The eyes may also be red and inflamed, with a yellow discharge. Food or water may come out the nose when the horse tries to eat or drink. Since swallowing is painful and difficult, many horses show a sharp drop in appetite and are, understandably, obviously depressed. The infection in the lymph nodes causes abscesses to develop inside these glands. The abscesses eventually rupture and drain, which can take anywhere from a few days to a few weeks. There is usually little to no cough, although a cough can often be induced by squeezing the horse's larynx ("voice box") or upper trachea ("windpipe").

Treatment:

Horses with early infections and only showing fever are usually treated for five to seven days. If strangles is caught this early, you may be able to completely prevent the development of abscesses. Horses with more advanced disease usually receive treatment for at least two weeks, and for several days after their temperatures have returned to normal.

Q&A:

Q: What does this mean for Eden Healing Center?

A: It means that our horses, including our pregnant mares and our new little Lassie, are completely off limits until further notice. No touching, petting, or even touching their round pen. Onyx and Sinatra, who had a BRIEF exposure last night, are completely symptom free, but they are also completely off-limits. They will be monitored for 14 days purely as a precaution per the veterinarian's suggestion. It was not mandatory, but we are not taking any chances.

Q: How did they get this?

A: Our horses have not left the property since they arrived in January, and therefore the only way that they could have contracted this virus is from contact with horses that carry the strangles virus. Unfortunately, there are horses kept in other pastures on that property that have recently come from kill pens. We gave strict instructions that our horses never be in direct contact with those horses, but contact must have occurred because there is no other explanation.

Q: How are we addressing Strangles moving forward?

A: We immediately contacted Northern Illinois Veterinary, and Dr. Sink saw our horses today and immediately made the diagnosis. Unfortunately, there is no medication to treat this, and the virus must run its course. We are praying that it moves quickly out of our horse community and that they recover swiftly.

Q: What are the proper protocols for caring for these infected animals?

A: We are posting a list of protocols, and they are extensive. For example, everyone who comes in contact with them must change their clothes and shoes and disinfect their hands after every interaction. Again, NO ONE should be interacting with these horses unless instructed to do so by Jessica.

Q: Are the other horses kept at Barb's farm safe and free from infection?

A: Yes. Thankfully, there is almost never any interaction between the two herds, and we are counting our blessing this evening for that.

Q: Can Strangles be contracted by humans or other animals?

A: No, except in extremely rare cases.

Q: How will this affect my child's lessons moving forward?

A: Since our lesson horses have been at the new location since November of 2020, we are grateful that the majority of our herd was never exposed. Lessons will continue as scheduled, and we foresee no interruptions.

Q: Are the horses going to be ok?

A: We have been given every indication that they will recover within the next 8 weeks.

Q: What can we do to help?

A: We welcome your prayers and good thoughts for Clancy, Asher, Apollo, Freia, Fiadh, Fiona, Lassie, and Hercules and for Sinatra and Onyx to have continued good health. Outside of your prayers, the best way to help is to keep your distance.

One final note: Jessica will be making daily trips to the Lake Shore Rd farm to monitor their recovery. There may be times when she may be delayed because she needs to change her clothes and disinfect her hands. Let's all try to give her some grace right now as we navigate through new waters.

As new information becomes available, we will be updating our posts.

The Eden Healing Center Board of Directors.

STRANGLES PROTOCOL

1. Isolate the horse and any other horses that have had direct, particularly nose-to-nose, contact with it. Isolation should be away from other horses in the yard with which they have not had such contact.
2. Call veterinarian and discuss appropriate management and treatment of symptoms.
3. If diagnosis is confirmed, then agree on detailed isolation and handling procedures with your veterinarian's guidance and implement these procedures immediately.
4. All horses should remain on the premises to protect neighboring yards and equine communities.
5. No horses should be allowed in or out of the yard at this time. Horses in the yard should remain under the care of the veterinarian and the highest standards of hygiene should be utilized.
6. Inform all owners of affected horses and exposed horses.
7. Keep a close eye on all other horses for signs and symptoms of Strangles. If any horse shows any signs or symptoms, immediately isolate the horse from other horses.
8. Provide separate water and food source for any affected horses. Do not allow access by any other animals to feed, water containers and tack of infected horse(s).
9. Restrict the number of people caring for affected horses to the minimum amount necessary. Those caring for the affected horses should follow strict hygiene protocols. People caring for the affected horses should change clothing and boots after caring for them. Clothing should be washed as normal, and boots should be sanitized. Hands should be washed thoroughly. People caring for the horses should change clothes and boots before entering their vehicle to avoid the risk of contamination of their vehicle. If that is not possible, the vehicle should also be sanitized before contact with unaffected horses occurs.
10. Horses must remain symptom free for 14 days before being removed from isolation. All equipment utilized in caring for affected horses must be thoroughly sanitized. Any remaining feed, water and bedding should be disposed of immediately and all containers sanitized.