

**Damory Veterinary
Clinic**

Damory Lodge
Edward Street
Blandford Forum
Dorset
DT11 7QT

Tel. 01258 452626

Damory Veterinary Clinic Equine Department



Strangles

ESSENTIAL FACTS

- Strangles is a bacterial infection caused by *Streptococcus equi subspecies equi*
- Common disease of the general horse population
- Exclusive to horses
- Highly contagious respiratory disease
- Infection is spread by ingestion / inhalation of secretions from the nose or abscesses, this can be by direct horse – horse contact or by coughing (aerosol) or via a third party e.g. human contact, grooming equipment, feed / water buckets and tack
- All ages of horse may be affected but 1 – 5 year olds are most susceptible
- Outbreaks occur because of the movement of ‘carrier’ animals
i.e. infective animals that are showing no signs of disease onto premises with susceptible horses

CLINICAL SIGNS

- Fever, loss of appetite, depression, nasal discharge, difficulty eating, coughing
- Abscess / lumps underneath and around the jaw line
- Clinical signs may last from 1 week – 2 months

N.B. Affected animals may remain infective for up to 2 months and occasionally 8 months!

COURSE OF THE DISEASE

fever / loss of appetite → abscessation → abscess rupture → recovery

COMPLICATIONS

- Rupture of abscess internally – into the throat or guttural pouch
- Internal spread of the infection e.g. to heart, lungs, abdomen (BASTARD STRANGLES)
- Anaemia / weight loss
- Purpura haemorrhagica:
 - fever swelling of limbs / head / abdomen
 - colic / renal disease

DIAGNOSIS

- Clinical signs
- Growth of specific bacteria from swabs taken of the nasal / throat / abscess secretions
- Blood test for carriers

CONTROL

- Quarantine / isolation and prevention of exposure to infected animals for at least 8 weeks after the last clinical symptoms have disappeared
- Cleanliness / disinfection of tack / buckets / personal clothing & footwear
- Routine monitoring of animals 'at risk' temperature

TREATMENT

- Most mild cases DO NOT require specific treatment
- General nursing care
- Soft food
- Hot compresses to encourage abscess development
- Drainage of abscess
- Careful disposal of discharges / bedding etc.
- antibiotic therapy (usually Penicillin) in severe cases

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUERY RELATING TO STRANGLES OR ANY OTHER ASPECT OR YOUR HORSE'S WELFARE, PLEASE CONTACT THE SURGERY.