

# Strangles Info Sheet



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## What is Strangles?

“Strangles” is an **upper respiratory infection** in horses caused by the bacteria *Streptococcus equi* subspecies *equi*. This bacterium typically infects the mandibular lymph nodes, giving the name “strangles”. In rare cases, the bacteria can invade lymph nodes in other regions of the body (chest or abdomen), which we call “bastard strangles”

**Clinical Signs:** It can take up to **2 weeks after exposure** to develop clinical signs!

- Fever (Temperature >38.5C)
- Reluctance to eat or drink
- Cough, thick nasal discharge
- Swelling (abscessation) of the mandibular or retropharyngeal lymph nodes
- If severe, excess/loud breathing sounds

## Transmission:

- **Direct** contact (nose to nose)
- Contaminated **objects** (fomites) such as water troughs, equipment, grooming tools, buckets, people and their clothes, and anything else you can think of!
- Subclinical shedding horses (those that carry the bacteria but are not showing clinical signs)

## Treatment:

Treatment required is typically **supportive care only**. Anti-inflammatories are given for fever and pain. Antibiotics are not typically indicated and can increase the chances of becoming a carrier or developing internal abscesses (bastard strangles). Strangles is rarely fatal - most animals recover.

## Ethics:

- Unfortunately, Strangles is not a reportable disease. That means we cannot force quarantine. It is up to you to protect your horse by using **good biosecurity** principles and **avoiding high risk** situations.
- If your horse may have been exposed to strangles **please notify anyone visiting** (vet, farrier, body-worker, coach) so they can take proper precautions

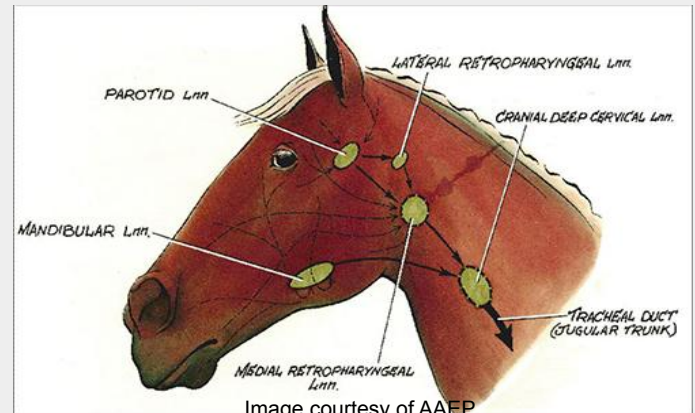


Image courtesy of AAEP

**IMPORTANT:** Get to know your horse!  
Take your horse's temperature when they are **healthy**, so you know what is normal for them and will be able to better detect an abnormal temp for **THAT** horse!

## Protecting your Herd:

- **BIOSECURITY** is the BEST protection!
  - If horses must travel, ensure they are **not contacting** other horses and **other people do not contact** your horse
    - This includes over-the stall contact, sharing manure forks, etc
  - Use a disinfectant such as Virkon
- If your horse does return home from a high risk situation or a new horse arrives on farm, **quarantine the horse** from the rest of the herd for **at least 2 weeks**
- The **first clinical sign is usually an increased temp**. If you are worried, take the temperature daily and call the vet at the first sign of an increased temp
- Vaccination can **decrease the severity** of disease. However, vaccination is **NOT** recommended in the face of an outbreak as risk of a very serious vaccine reaction is increased if the horse is exposed to the strangles disease and the vaccine at the same time