**CLIENT EDUCATION HANDOUT**

**Customer Name, Street Address, City, State, Zip code**

**Phone number, Alt. phone number, Fax number, e-mail address, web site**

**Influenza**

**Basics**

**Overview**

* Infection of the respiratory tract caused by the equine influenza virus
* Highly contagious and can spread rapidly between horses, in particular young horses
* Signs include a fever, nasal discharge, cough, and depression

**Signalment**

* All ages and breeds can be affected
* Young (1–3 years) horses and nonvaccinated horses are usually most severely affected
* Donkeys can develop severe illness

**Signs**

* Cough, nasal discharge, depression, fever
* Milder/no signs in vaccinated horses

**Causes**

* Infection with equine influenza virus

**Risk Factors**

* All animals at risk
* Unvaccinated animals most at risk

**Treatment**

**Appropriate Health Care**

* Diagnosis is confirmed using a nasal swab to detect the viral DNA (called a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test)
* No specific medications
* Anti-inflammatory drugs to bring down fever and improve appetite

**Activity**

* Several weeks of rest is recommended to allow for a full recovery

**Diet**

* No specific dietary recommendations
* Appetite is often decreased so tempting horses with a variety of feeds may be necessary

**Medications**

* Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs can be used to control fever and improve appetite
* No specific antiviral drugs are typically used
* Antibiotics may be required if a secondary bacterial infection develops
* Vaccination can be used to minimize the risk of contracting the virus, and ameliorate the severity of signs if infection does occur

**Follow-Up**

**PatientMonitoring**

* Monitoring of fever twice a day
* Monitoring for development of a purulent nasal discharge, which may indicate a bacterial infection

**PossibleComplications**

* Damage to the lining of the respiratory tract can result in secondary bacterial disease
* A chronic cough can result, especially if a sufficient rest period is not given

**Expected Course and Prognosis**

* Most horses will recover within 1–3 weeks
* Because the respiratory tract lining can be severely damaged, a more prolonged period of rest is recommended before work is commenced
* Prognosis is excellent for most horses, although foals and donkeys can develop severe disease, and horses with secondary bacterial pneumonia have a worse prognosis

**Key Points**

* A highly contagious virus causing respiratory disease in horses
* Effective quarantine/biosecurity and vaccination protocols can significantly limit the spread of infection
* Most horses will recover with supportive care and rest. Although there is a period of immunity after infection of up to 12 months, reinfection can occur, so biosecurity and vaccination protocols should remain in place



|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Enter notes here |  |

*Blackwell's Five-Minute Veterinary Consult: Equine, Third Edition,* Jean-Pierre Lavoie © 2020 John Wiley & Sons, Inc.