

# SPRING 2015 NEWS LETTER

The coming of spring in Montana can vary widely, but one thing is constant: foals arrive despite the weather. They bring with them a host of new opportunities and potential, but can also come with health problems that can spiral out of control quickly. Are you ready for the new baby to be here? If it's been a while since you've had a youngster join the herd, the doctors at Montana Equine encourage you to familiarize yourself with the basics of the first hours of life. Read on to refresh yourself on caring for your mare, monitoring the birth, and taking care of the foal in the first few days of life.

## FOALING: THE 1-2-3 RULE

**First hour:** Water breaking to delivery. Set your watch! Once the mare's water breaks, the foal should be out by 30 minutes. Call us if the process takes any longer than this. Dystocia is a true medical emergency.

By the time the foal is an hour old, he should be **standing**.

**Second hour:** The foal progresses from standing to **nursing** by 2 hours. The first milk the mare makes, colostrum, is crucial to keeping the foal healthy. One of the most important reasons they need to nurse is to inherit protection from the mare against different bugs. If they don't get that protection, they can get septicemic (bacteria in their bloodstream), joint ill, navel ill, and other problems. We can run a stall-side blood test when they're several hours old to ensure they're well enough protected. Don't forget to take a close look to make sure the youngster has actually latched on!

**Third hour:** The mare should **pass her placenta** within three hours of having the foal. If it is retained, it can lead to consequences like metritis (infection of the uterus), founder, and systemic infection.

## LEARN MORE

[Check out our website](#) for more information on neonates. Follow us on Facebook for clinic updates, useful resources, and pictures of our patients!

[Take a look](#) at this infographic from The Horse that goes into more detail about what happens when the foal doesn't get the colostrum it needs.

## SPRING VACCINES

Now is a good time to consider ways to prevent diseases, even before they have a chance to become endemic in your herd. In addition to infections carried by mosquitoes and flies, many bacterial diseases can be vectored into your barnyard by birds.

As always, it is a difficult balance. We believe that "less is more" but also that "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure". This is a year where we recommend tipping the balance towards increased intervention to help safeguard your horses'

health.

Some vaccines, like those for Rabies and West Nile virus can prevent infections with a high fatality rate. Rabies is uncommon in horses but is 100% fatal. Rabies is on the rise in Montana, and while it is carried by bats and skunks, horses can become infected. In some tragic cases, people have become fatally infected from exposure to a rabid horse. It is part of the core vaccination protocol recommended by the [American Association of Equine Practitioners](#)

Over the past few years, the state of Montana has had more cases of West Nile Virus in horses than almost every other state. West Nile Virus is 35% fatal, but the vaccine is very safe, and extremely effective at preventing disease.

Spring de-worming will be extra important too. But instead of simply de-worming on the old-fashioned rotational system, we strongly recommend having fecal testing done on your horses. For one thing, we can treat only when necessary and avoid giving unnecessary medications (less is MORE!). At the same time, we can minimize parasite resistance and maintain effectiveness of the medications.

**Click here for Vaccination/De-Worming Recommendations:**

[Montana Equine Recommendations](#)  
[American Association of Equine Practitioners Recommendations](#)

**Click here for Information on Parasite Testing Recommendations:**

[SmartPak's Rotational Chart](#)  
[Risks of Over-Worming](#)

Aside from increasing the risk of preventable diseases spread by birds, insects, and other horses in warm weather, the recent warm weather also means increasing rates of other conditions like "heaves" (or equine asthma), conjunctivitis, internal and external parasites, founder, and other health problems. Specialization allows our team to really focus on the important issues, and provide the all-important "ounce of prevention". The cost of an appropriate vaccine is so much cheaper than the cost of an unnecessary infection.

All of our veterinarians and staff only see equine patients, and we have the tools and the expertise to provide you with the very best in equine veterinary medicine. But sometimes, the best tools are the simplest - basic prevention can help your horses lead a long, healthy and happy life.

Here at Montana Equine, we keep abreast of the latest literature and preventative medicine strategies, so that you don't have to! We are happy to provide you with the tools you need to keep your equine family members in tip-top shape, so that you can enjoy this fine weather with peace of mind. We enjoy working with our clients to design a disease prevention strategy that works for you and your horses.

Please call us, or your local veterinarian, to discuss preventative strategies to keep

your equine family healthy!

Doctors and Staff at Montana Equine

**\$10 OFF RABIES  
VACCINATION**

**Mention "Ounce of Prevention" Coupon**

Please consider  
vaccination against rabies.

Protect your horse; Rabies  
is Preventable!

***Offer Expires: 6/15/2015***