

Equine Veterinary Care during COVID-19 Pandemic

In New York, Equine Veterinary practice is considered an essential service and equine veterinarians are permitted to provide services as needed for the care and protection of your horses. Vaccines and other wellness care are still critical to the well-being of the horse as well as acute care for illness and injury.

Many veterinarians have adjusted how they are providing these services in order to protect clients, staff and the horses we all love. Some examples of this are:

- Prior to appointments the veterinarian may confirm with the client they are symptom free, have not been possibly exposed or under any type of isolation or quarantine related to COVID-19.
- Preferentially appointments may be scheduled at the veterinarian's facility if they have one. This will facilitate "curb-side" service.
 - Curb-side service means that your horse will be taken into the facility and will be cared for by the staff. Consultation between you and the veterinary staff will take place via phone. Payment can be done by contactless methods such as credit card.
- Limiting the number of people present at the time of the appointment if done where the horse is. Only one person should be present to handle the horse at the time of the appointment.
- If there are multiple owners that board at the same place only the owner/handler of the horse currently being examined and treated should be in the barn with the veterinarian and staff. Others should remain in their vehicles until it is time for their horse to be seen.
- Veterinary staff will wear masks and other protective equipment. Owners are asked to wear masks as well.
 - In cases where a technician is available, the owner may be asked to allow the tech to handle the horse and stay a safe distance away.
- Hand sanitizer and disinfecting wipes will be used regularly. This may include handling of credit cards, pens, money, etc. Invoices and examination results may be emailed to the owners.

Other considerations may affect how an appointment is approached. At facilities where a person known to have contracted COVID-19 was present and arrangements can't be made for the horse to be brought to the veterinarian's facility the horse may need to be brought outside the facility to be cared for to limit exposure for everyone. Non-urgent appointments may be rescheduled.

Delivery of shipments to veterinary facilities is usually swift, but delays have been occurring related to the pandemic. If you have a horse on chronic medications please contact your vet for refills well in advance of running out to avoid an interruption in medication due to a shipping delay.

This pandemic has caused difficulties for many people economically as well. As a result arranging payment can be stressful. Care Credit is available, and can be used for with 6 month interest free billing on amounts over \$200.00. Please visit www.carecredit.com to apply. Along those same lines, the United Horse Coalition has a fantastic "horse owners page" with great resources during this time at <https://unitedhorsecoalition.org/covid-19-resources/#horse-owners>. Please take a few minutes and familiarize yourself with the resources that are available.

Equine veterinarians are dedicated to caring for our beloved horses in the safest manner for everyone. We look forward to serving you and your horses. Please help flatten the curve.

Provided by the veterinarians at Royalton Equine Veterinary Services, PC in Lockport, NY