



Personal protective equipment PPE - Hendra Virus

An overview of the recommended hygiene and biosecurity recommendations for dealing with suspected hendra virus infections in horses.

Since June 2011, the Hendra virus has caused eight confirmed horse deaths in Queensland and a further four in New South Wales. The deadly nature of the disease to humans means that strict biosecurity around suspected infected horses is of the utmost importance.

Horse owners are urged to review their biosecurity procedures and contact a veterinarian immediately if they suspect Hendra virus. Recommended good hygiene practices include:

Wash hands with soap and water between contact with horses, especially after handling your horse's mouth or nose
Cover any cuts and scratches
Avoid contact with blood or other bodily fluids (especially respiratory and nasal secretions, saliva and urine) and tissues
Shower after contact with sick horses
Attend to sick horses last (healthy first)
Feed and water from a distance
Observe horses from a distance and notify your veterinarian immediately of any change in the health status of any horse
Stop movement of horses, equipment, personnel and horse manure on or off the property
Separate clean and infected areas of the property if possible

Further to these general hygiene practices, biosecurity measures dictate that the following personal protective equipment (PPE) should be worn at all times and disposed of after contact with each suspected horse:
Disposable gloves (preferably nitrile), double-gloved - see Nitesafe Nitrile Examination Gloves
Impervious coveralls - see Hazguard MP4 Coveralls (Type 4, 5 and 6)

Impervious boot covers - see Shintoe PP/PE/PVC Boot Covers
P2 respirators - see P2 Conical Disposable Respirator
Eye protection

Ensure you have adequate supplies of PPE for return visits. Always perform hand hygiene after removing PPE. The Biosecurity Queensland Guidelines for veterinarians handling potential Hendra virus infection in horses provides a comprehensive guide to the use of PPE including the appropriate methods of removal and disposal of such equipment.

For further information on the Hendra virus and appropriate biosecurity measures, please contact your state's department of primary industries or equivalent department.

References and Resources:

Hendra Virus – Horse Farm Biosecurity – Primary Industries and Resources SA, Biosecurity Division
Hendra Virus Frequently Asked Questions – NSW Department of Primary Industries
Hendra Virus Current Situation – Queensland Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries
Hendra Virus Update no 14 (18 July 2011) - Queensland Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries

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