

Buying A New Horse?

Buying a New Horse? Here's What You Need to Know to Keep Horses Healthy

Bringing home a new horse is exciting! It is also an important time to protect the health of your new horse and any other horses it may meet. Following a few key steps can help prevent the spread of disease and avoid costly problems.

1. Get the Right Paperwork (CVI)

Before your horse travels, most states require an **Official Certificate of Veterinary Inspection (CVI)**. This exam is done by a licensed veterinarian to check that the horse appears healthy at the time of travel.

- A CVI is usually required for horses crossing state lines
- It helps reduce the spread of contagious diseases
- It is often required for shows, sales, and boarding facilities

Important: A CVI is a basic health check. It does **not** guarantee that the horse is free from all diseases.

2. Test for EIA (Coggins Test)

Horses must be tested for **Equine Infectious Anemia (EIA)**, a serious disease spread by biting flies.

- A negative **Coggins test** is required for travel and events
- This test must be done by a USDA-accredited Category II veterinarian
- EIA has no cure and can spread to other horses

Always ask for proof of a recent negative test before buying or moving a horse.

3. Consider a Pre-Purchase Exam

A **pre-purchase exam** is different from a CVI and is strongly recommended.

- It is a more detailed exam done before you buy the horse
- It can include soundness checks, lab tests, and imaging
- It helps you understand the horse's health, fitness, and risks

This exam can help you avoid unexpected medical or performance problems.

4. Quarantine Your New Horse (At Least 3 Weeks)

When your new horse arrives, keep it separated from other horses for **at least 21 days**.

Good quarantine practices include:

- House the new horse in a separate area
- Do not share buckets, tack, or equipment
- Care for the new horse **last** each day

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- Wash hands and change clothes after handling

Watch for signs of illness:

- Fever
- Nasal discharge
- Coughing
- Swelling (especially under the jaw)

If you notice any of these signs, contact your veterinarian right away.

5. Be Aware of Strangles

Strangles is a common and contagious disease in horses.

- It spreads easily through contact and shared equipment
- Signs include fever, nasal discharge, and swollen lymph nodes
 - Horses with a fever and these symptoms should be quarantined and tested
- Quarantine helps prevent the spread of this disease

Ask your veterinarian for guidance on prevention and what to do if you suspect illness.

Take Home Message

Taking these steps helps protect your new horse, your other horses, and your local horse community. Working closely with your veterinarian is the best way to keep your horses healthy and safe.

If you have questions, don't hesitate to reach out to your veterinarian.

Healthy horses start with informed owners!

To learn more about the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry's Animal Health Program, visit us on the web at www.maine.gov/dacf/animalhealth

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Horse Owner Educational Resources (Scan QR Codes)

AAEP Horse Owner Resources



AAEP Guidelines & Resources



AAEP Infectious Disease Guidelines



USDA APHIS Equine Health



USDA EIA (Coggins) Info

