

## Where to Inject

There are two injection sites where a vaccine or medication may be placed in a horse.

### Injection Areas



**Neck Region:** This area is frequently used. However, care must be exercised not to inject too high in the neck and injure the large ligament, or inject too low in the neck and injure the cervical vertebrae (neck bones). The jugular area should also be avoided because important nerves and blood vessels are in this area. Injections should be given about a hands width (3-4 inches) in front of the shoulder blade.



**Hind leg or Hamstring Region:** The advantage here is two-fold. The hamstring is a very large, freely moving muscle, and it is easy to reach. The disadvantage is that the horse can kick you.

## How to Inject

Knowing how to give an injection is every bit as important as knowing when and where to inject. By following proper procedures, you not only insure safety and sterility but also make the injection process as painless as possible for your horse, and as easy as possible for you. Here are the main steps to remember when vaccinating:

1. Use a 20-22 gauge 1.5 inch needle
2. Use a new syringe for each horse and vaccine to maintain sterility and avoid the spread of bacteria and viruses.
3. Keep the needle sheathed until immediately before the injection. It is extremely easy to stick yourself, another person, or simply to contaminate the needle.
4. Disinfect the skin with alcohol. Tap the skin a few times, and then thrust the needle in quickly, deep into the muscle, all the way to the hub.
5. Attach the syringe to the inserted needle carefully. Pull back the plunger to insure that you are not in a blood vessel. Blood will come back into the needle hub or syringe if you are in a vessel. If this happens, withdraw the needle, and try again.
6. If you are injecting a large volume of medication (for example, antibiotic), you should not put more than 10mL in one site. You can divide the medication into two separate sites.
7. Massage the site for 30-60 seconds after the injection to help distribute the medication and avoid soreness.
8. If the injection was a vaccination, allow the horse plenty of rest and free exercise for 2-3 days.