

IDEXX Reference Laboratories Responds to EHV-1 Cases

Reports of an equine herpesvirus myeloencephalopathy (EHM) outbreak caused by the neuropathogenic form of equine herpesvirus type 1 (EHV-1) have surfaced within the last several weeks. Cases have been reported in various locations across the United States and Canada. While the true extent of this disease outbreak is still uncertain, control of the outbreak is critically dependent on biosecurity. Part of the biosecurity measure is to accurately identify infected horses in a timely manner using the appropriate diagnostic tests.

Diagnostic options

Real-time PCR has become the diagnostic test of choice because of its high analytical sensitivity and specificity. Virus isolation, another available methodology, is time-consuming and less sensitive than real-time PCR. IDEXX offers a range of RealPCR™ testing options for identification of horses infected with EHV-1.

Horse populations recommended for testing

- Sick or healthy horses exposed to EHM confirmed horses.
- Horses with neurological signs of EHM, including high fever, ataxia, partial or complete paralysis and incontinence.
- Horses that are quarantined until EHV-1 infection is confirmed or eliminated based upon both a negative PCR test and a lack of clinical signs for the disease.

IDEXX RealPCR tests and panels

when to use	test name and contents	test code
Screening of nonclinical or clinical, exposed horses	Equine Herpesvirus Types 1 (EHV-1) and 4 (EHV-4) RealPCR™ Tests	2699
	2–11 Specimens	26992
	12 or More Specimens	26993
Horses with neurological clinical signs compatible with EHM	Equine Neurologic Disease Panel EPM by Western blot (serum), West Nile virus IgM antibody by capture ELISA, equine herpesvirus type 1 (EHV-1) RealPCR™ test	2619
Comprehensive respiratory screening of clinical horses with unknown exposure history	Equine Respiratory RealPCR™ Panel (Comprehensive)	3324
	Equine adenovirus, equine influenza virus (EIV/H3N8), equine herpesvirus type 1 (EHV-1), type 2 (EHV-2), type 4 (EHV-4) and type 5 (EHV-5), equine rhinitis A virus, equine rhinitis B virus and <i>Streptococcus equi</i> subsp. <i>equi</i> RealPCR™ tests. Includes culture (organism ID only) on selective media for β-hemolytic <i>Streptococcus</i> spp.	
Treatment monitoring of EHV-1 confirmed horses	Equine Respiratory RealPCR™ Panel (Standard)	2740
	Equine influenza virus (EIV/H3N8), equine herpesvirus type 1 (EHV-1) and type 4 (EHV-4) and <i>Streptococcus equi</i> subsp. <i>equi</i> RealPCR™ tests. Includes culture (organism ID only) on selective media for β-hemolytic <i>Streptococcus</i> spp.	
Treatment monitoring of EHV-1 confirmed horses	Equine Herpesvirus Type 1 (EHV-1) RealPCR™ Test	2566
	2–11 Specimens	25662
	12 or More Specimens	25663

Specimen requirements

7 mL EDTA whole blood or nasal swabs (one from each nostril). For equine neurologic disease panel submissions, include 2 mL of serum. For respiratory disease panel submissions, nasal swabs are preferred specimen type and should be collected prior to antibiotic administration. For nasal swabs, please submit dry, plastic-stemmed swabs, without transport media, in an RTT or an empty, sterile tube; keep refrigerated.

Contacting IDEXX

If you have any questions regarding IDEXX RealPCR tests and panels as well as the EHV-1 outbreak, including disease management, biosecurity, vaccination or treatment options, please do not hesitate to call the IDEXX equine internal medicine consulting service at 1-888-433-9987, option 4, option 3. Because of the large volume of testing, there may be some minor delays in reference laboratory test results.

IDEXX complies with local and national reporting requirements for EHV.

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