

Don't horse about when it comes to being COVID-positive

By Dr Mac | 25 February 2024 | 10:00 am

This remains a notifiable disease but the lockdown no longer exists. Although it is not much more severe than a common cold, make sure you have contingency plans in place should you need someone else to take care of your horses, says Dr Mac.



Regardless of whether you are ill or not, your horses still need care.

Photo: Wikimedia Commons

Every now and then I go for a health check-up. Included in this is a full blood test at a clinical lab. I made an appointment and was directed to sit down and hold out my arm for a puncture. It's much easier for human nurses than veterinarians.

Nurses don't have to muzzle those of us who are being bled. However, in future I will insist anyone sticking a needle into my vein wears a mask. Why? Because two days later I had an itchy throat and a runny nose and a diagnostic PCR swab confirmed that I was COVID-19-positive.

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So I rushed off to an after-hours medical clinic and my suspicions were confirmed. The doctor gave me a script for a cortisone inhalant and told me I would be fine, insisting: "It's just like a common cold."

My fever was not elevated. My oxygen levels were fine and my heart was fluttering at its normal speed, slightly irregularly as I have a bit of a heart problem after a motor accident in 2006.

Now we come to the exciting part for me as a horse owner, who was scheduled to exhibit my Quarter Horses at a show the next weekend.

The doctor gave me a typed notification form, from the National Department of Health, which stated that CoVar SARS-2 was a notifiable disease and patients who were found positive needed to go into quarantine for a specific period.

My quarantine was five days if the symptoms were mild and I was sick for five days or less. That gave me pause for thought.

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A positive test on Friday night. Eight days later I had to make an appearance at a horse show. Not only did I have to rely on my staff to prepare the horses, but I had to ensure I kept as far away from them as possible and communicate by cell phone.

Horse owners who survived COVID-19 are well aware of the headache it causes to have part of your workforce in quarantine because they are infected. The medical boffins have not gone lockdown crazy this time round.

The only people who find out the rules, are those, like myself, who land up at a doctor who gives you a printed set of rules while you are coughing into a handkerchief.

Fortunately, I was vaccinated and could stock up on Flugon, which is an over-the-counter cold and flu remedy full of vitamin C and lots of natural products. I always have Vicks inhaler in my bag for those chilly morning rides that make your nose run.

Silverlab nasal spray is also great for knocking out viruses in your nasal tubes, where corona viruses are likely to multiply. Vets deal with coronaviruses in puppies and kittens and layer hens. So it's not daunting! In three days, I tested negative.

I wore a mask and stayed home five days and could attend the show (although I wore a surgical mask underneath that cowboy triangular scarf pulled up over my nose).

The main point: I did not infect my staff, so did not have to take over the feeding and mucking out and filling tef nets and lunging riding horses. None of them caught the bug!

Source: [*SARS-CoV-2 Sequencing Update*](#)