



**American Association
of Equine Practitioners**

Horse Health Education

EMERGENCY CARE

**Guidelines To Follow
During Equine Emergencies**

www.aaep.org/horseowner



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ROUTINE HEALTH CHECK





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As a horse owner, you must know how to recognize serious problems, respond promptly and take appropriate action while waiting for the veterinarian to arrive.



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Types of emergencies you may encounter include:

- Colic
- Lacerations
- Acute Lameness
- Eye Injuries
- Allergic Reactions
- Choke
- Foaling Emergencies



RECOGNIZE SIGNS OF DISTRESS

- Decreased appetite
- Lethargic
- Lying down longer than normal
- Single animal off by itself
- Sudden lameness
- Squinting, tearing or holding the eye closed
- Fever (greater than 102° F)
- Purple or red gum color



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PLAN AHEAD



Keep important information handy such as your veterinarian's phone number including how to reach him/her after hours.



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STAY SAFE





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NATURAL DISASTER PLAN



For more information on preparing
for natural disasters visit:
www.aaep.org/emergency



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TRANSPORT





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ASSESSMENT



Is it safe to approach the horse?

If so:

- Catch and calm the horse.
- If possible, take the horse to a safe place such as a stall or paddock.
- Get someone to help you.



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GET ASSISTANCE



It always helps to have assistance in times of an emergency.



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FIRST-AID KIT





FIRST-AID KIT

- Gauze pads
- Roll cotton
- Brown gauze
- Adhesive wrap
- Leg wraps
- Scissors
- White tape
- Duct tape
- Stethoscope
- Thermometer
- Hoof pick
- Surgical soap
- Eye wash
- Antiseptic solution
- Latex gloves
- Flashlight and spare batteries



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KNOW WHAT IS NORMAL

When you know what is “normal” for your horse, this will make it easier to recognize a problem and describe the horse’s condition to your veterinarian.



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BASIC EXAM

Take the time to gather information to relay to your veterinarian such as:



- Temperature
- Heart rate
- Respiratory rate
- Gut sounds
- Mucous membrane color
- Capillary refill time
- Attitude and appetite



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RECTAL TEMPERATURE



Normal temperature for a horse is 99.5 to 101.5 degrees Fahrenheit.
(37.5 to 38.6 Celsius)



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HEART RATE

Normal resting Heart
Rate = 28 to 44 Beats
per Minute (BPM)



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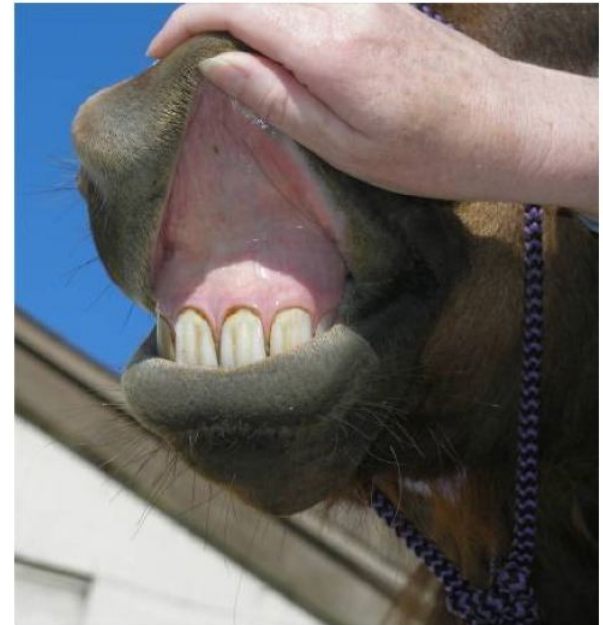
RESPIRATORY RATE

Normal rate = 12 to 16
Breaths per Minute



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CAPILLARY REFILL TIME & MEMBRANE COLOR





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SKIN PLIABILITY

Test your horse for hydration by performing the skin pinch test.



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GUT SOUNDS





ATTITUDE & APPETITE

A change in personality or attitude may indicate pain or disease.

A loss of appetite is a good indication that your horse does not feel well.



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COLIC





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COLIC SYMPTOMS





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THINGS TO TELL THE VET

- Recent changes in feed or routine;
- Medical information such as pregnancy or recent vaccinations, deworming, etc.;
- Heart rate and gut sounds;
- Quantity and consistency of manure passed in the last 24 hours;
- Do not give your horse any medication or home remedy unless specifically instructed by the veterinarian.



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WOUNDS & BLEEDING

Horses frequently get cuts and scrapes. It is important to know which wounds need veterinary attention.



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WOUNDS

Wounds that need immediate veterinary attention include:





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BLEEDING



- Blood squirting or flowing in a steady stream from a wound needs to be controlled.
- To stop bleeding, hold a sterile pad or clean towel to the wound and apply steady, firm pressure.
- Apply a pressure bandage.



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FOREIGN BODY PENETRATIONS



- If possible, impaled objects should be left in place.
- Notify your veterinarian before attempting to remove a large foreign object.
- Removing them may cause blood loss or further damage.



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NAIL IN THE FOOT





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EYE INJURIES

An eye injury may be indicated by the following:



- Excess tear production;
- Eye looks cloudy;
- Mucus discharge;
- Holding the eye closed or sensitive to light;
- Swelling around the eye or eyelids;
- Laceration of the eyelid.



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EYE INJURIES



Do not attempt to treat the injury.

Wait for your veterinarian.



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SUDDEN LAMENESS



Causes of lameness may include:

- Hoof Abscess (*most common cause*)
- Fractures
- Laminitis
- Tendon injuries



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FRACTURES



Contact your veterinarian immediately and try to keep the horse calm.



LAMINITIS

Laminitis is an extremely painful condition caused by inflammation within the hoof.



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SIGNS





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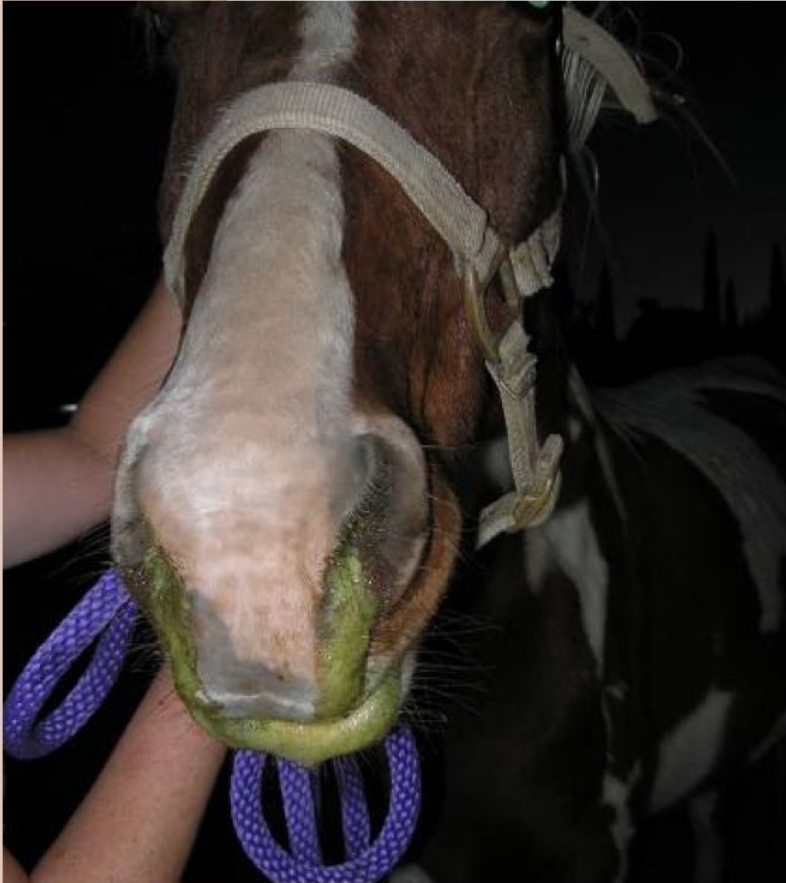


ALLERGIC REACTIONS





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SIGNS OF CHOKE

- Coughing & Retching
- Extending the neck
- Large amounts of nasal discharge, containing food and saliva.



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FOALING



Fortunately, foaling problems are rare, but when there is a problem, it is usually serious.

Ideally, the mare should be attended when she foals so problems can be identified quickly.



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A NORMAL, HEALTHY FOAL

Should stand within 1 hour;
Should nurse within 2 hours;
Mare will pass the afterbirth within 3 hours.

This is known as the 1, 2, 3 of foaling.



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VETERINARY EXAM



Picture courtesy of Lourie Zipf



DANGER SIGNALS

Notify your veterinarian immediately if:

- The foal seems depressed or lethargic
- Increased temperature > 102° F
- Increased or labored breathing
- Straining to defecate or urinate
- Signs of colic
- Yellow around the eyes or gums
- Swollen or painful joints
- Swollen or painful umbilicus
- Diarrhea



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PROVIDE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT





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By acting promptly, you can help minimize the risks of an injury or illness.

Your horse's health and well being depend on it.





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Eric De Vos, DVM
www.EquineU.com

Florida Equine Veterinary Services, Inc.
Clermont, Florida

Janis Tremper, Equine Photographer
www.janistremper.com



www.louriezipf.com
louzieann@aol.com

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970.663.4322



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Pfizer Animal Health





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