

What all owners should know how to do:

Describe horse's attitude – bright, depressed, anxious, uncomfortable

Take horse's temperature

Determine horse's heart rate by listening to the heart or feeling a pulse

Determine horse's respiratory rate by looking at nostrils or flank area

Assess horse's appetite and water consumption

Assess horse's manure output – amount and consistency

Assess horse's urine output – amounts (wet spots in stall) and color

Listen for gut motility – be able to tell when there are no gut sounds

Look at mucous membranes – know normal color and texture (dry, tacky)

Feel digital pulses

Assess heat in legs and hooves

Grade Lameness – mild, moderate, severe (non- weight bearing)

Look for nasal and ocular discharge – noting color

As owners you should know your horses better than anyone, take the time to run your hands all over them feeling all their bumps and scars so that you will know what is normal or old and will be able to catch any new problems when they arise.

Normal Vital Signs

Heart rate 32-44 minutes (horses that are in very good shape may have a resting rate of 28)

Respiratory rate 8-20/minute

Temperature 98-101 degrees Fahrenheit

Eye Problems

Symptoms:	increase tearing Discharge from eyes – white, yellow, green Holding eyelid partially to fully closed Swollen eyelids Reddened conjunctiva Cloudiness of the eye ball – hazy blue, white
First Aid:	move horse out of the bright light – bring into barn, stall Look at eye with flashlight and assess problem – eye laceration, corneal problem or foreign body on or in eye * Flush eye with sterile saline *apply triple antibiotic ointment Apply cold compress *do not do if there is a tear, puncture or foreign body protruding from the eye ball
Call Veterinarian:	Any time there is an eye problem, anterior uveitis (moon blindness) and corneal ulcers need quick attention in order to achieve the best results. Eyelid lacerations should always be sutured because leaving even the smallest defect in the eyelid can result in problems later in life (dry eye, recurring corneal ulcers)

Fever

Temperatures over 102 degrees

Symptoms:	feel warm to touch Depression Decreased appetite May be secondary to an infection or heat exhaustion
First Aid:	Assess heart rate, respiratory rate and temperature attempt to identify and address cause if apparent -Infected wound –clean with betadine, apply ointment and wrap if possible - heat exhaustion-offer water with electrolytes, sponge down and hose legs give Bute or banamine after veterinary recommendation
Call Veterinarian:	to help determine source of fever and institute proper therapy

Colic

Symptoms:	Decreased or no appetite Depression or anxiety Pawing at ground Looking at sides Straining to Urinate or defecate Lying down at irregular times during the day Excessive rolling No manure for over 12 hours
First Aid:	TAKE ALL FOOD AWAY Assess heart rate, respiratory rate, and temperature Look at gum color and texture Listen for gut sounds Assess manure output – amount and consistency Offer warm water Walk – will help increase gut motility and distract from pain DO NOT LET ROLL! (may lie down if they will lie quietly) If sweating in summer cool down with sponge bath, in winter keep warm w/blankets Dose orally mineral oil or milk of magnesia after veterinarian recommendation
Call Veterinarian:	If heart rate, respiratory rate, or temperature are above normal If there has not been any manure passed for over 12 hours If there are not gut sounds and the horse looks bloated If signs worsen or do not improve
*Once you call the veterinarian stay by the phone and stay off the line!	
Be able to tell the veterinarian: assessment of pain/attitude/appetite	
Amount of manure passed in the last 12 hours and consistency	
Water consumption in last 12 hours	
Heart rate, respiratory rate and temperature	
Any recent changes in feed, exercise, housing	
Any recent deworming	

Grain Overload

Over 2-3 times normal amount of grain is ingested

Possible Complications:	Colic Bloat Laminates
First Aid:	Asses heart rate, respiratory rate, temperature Take away all available grain Do not let gorge on water – offer small amounts at a time Dose orally with mineral oil – as much as possible Feel feet for heat and digital pulses Walk if colicky
Call Veterinarian:	If colic signs occur If feet are warm and/or there are bounding digital pulses
Be able to tell veterinarian how much grain was ingested and in what time frame it occurred	

Choke

Esophageal obstruction

Symptoms:	Sudden loss of appetite Extension of head and neck while attempting to swallow Increased salivation Feed and/or fluid coming out of nostrils Deep cough Depression/ anxiety
First Aid:	Take all food away Dose orally with warm water Assess heart rate, respiratory rate, and temperature Encourage to swallow by gently massaging neck
Call Veterinarian:	If unfamiliar with choke If horse is very anxious If unable to relieve choke

Foreign Body in the foot

Symptoms:

Non weight bearing lame
Swelling in the lower limb
Heat in the hoof
Increased digital pulse

First Aid:

Examine leg and hoof to determine cause of pain/swelling

If there is a foreign body **DO NOT PULL IT OUT** unless there is a possibility there will be deeper penetration into the hoof. This will allow the veterinarian to take radiographs of the hoof and be able to clearly see how deep and what structures may be affected by the foreign body.

If the foreign body has fallen out or already been removed clean out the hoof scrub the bottom of the sole with betadine and soak hoof in warm water with betadine and Epsom salts for a half hour, then wrap hoof

Call Veterinarian:

If there is any foreign body in the hoof of unknown length and destination that is causing the horse to be lame

If the foreign body has been removed or fell out and there was blood from the hole

Laminitis (Founder)

Symptoms:

reluctance to move
"Saw horse" stance trying to keep weight back off of the front feet
Heat in hooves
Increase digital pluses
May appear lame in 1 – 4 legs

First Aid:

Assess heart rate, respiratory rate, and temperature
Feel hooves for heat
Assess digital pulses
Put horse in heavily bedded stall

DO NOT WALK further than necessary, the laminae are fragile and any movement may enhance the damage, i.e. rotation,

Do not feed any grain

Give bute after veterinarian recommendation

Give acepromazine/promazine granules after veterinarian recommendation

Call Veterinarian:

It is important to call as soon as signs are present, prognosis can be greatly influenced by speed of treatment

Severe Lameness

Symptoms:

Mild to non-weight bearing lame
Pointing forward or holding up lame leg when standing
Reluctant to move
Obvious displacement of limb
Pain to touch or manipulation
Heat and swelling in area of problem
Increased heart rate, respiratory rate, and temperature
Decreased appetite
Depression or anxiety
Sweating

First aid:

DO NOT MOVE if non-weight bearing lame
if there is obvious displacement
if there is a fracture
Confine to stall
Assess heart rate, respiratory rate, temperature
Look at mucous membranes
Assess appetite, do not feed if obviously distressed
If there is bleeding how much, apply pressure
Try to localize heat, swelling, and soreness
Check for open wounds, punctures, and foreign bodies
Cold hose affected leg
Put support wrap on opposite leg
If sweating –summer cool down with sponge bath, winter put on blanket
Give bute after veterinary recommendation

Call Veterinarian:

For any acute lameness

Be able to tell the veterinarian the complete history of the onset of injury, which leg and how lame. Location and amount of swelling or heat. If there is an open wound or bone exposed. If there is any bleeding and how much blood loss.

Edema and Hematoma

Symptoms:	Swelling
First Aid:	Assess heart rate, respiratory rate, and temperature Locate area of swelling – over bone, joint, or muscle Look for wound – scrape, laceration, or puncture Cold hose Apply DMSO gel after veterinary recommendation Give bute after veterinary recommendation If lower leg – poultice if heat – sweat if there is no heat

***Do not put the poultice or the sweat directly on any wounds**

Call Veterinarian	If there is any doubt over assessment of area or if there is a laceration or puncture or pronounced lameness
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Tying up

Symptoms:	usually after increased exertion of energy or exercise Increased stiffness Reluctance to move Hard sore muscles May be localized or general Increased heart rate, respiratory rate Sweating Anxiety Dark urine (red/brown)
First Aid:	Assess heart rate, respiratory rate, and temperature Do not force to move, may cause damage to muscles Offer small amounts of water with electrolytes Give bute after veterinary recommendation Give acepromazine/promazine granules after veterinary recommendation
Call Veterinarian:	If mild symptoms to do blood work to confirm diagnosis If severe symptoms If there is dark urine – it is important to run fluids to dilute the urine to reduce incidence of renal damage

Laceration and Puncture Wounds

Symptoms:	Bleeding, pus, swelling, pain, and lameness
First Aid:	<p>If excessive bleeding, apply pressure to stop</p> <p>Assess heart rate, respiratory rate and temperature</p> <p>Assess lameness, soreness, swelling, and discharge</p> <p>Note location, size and depth</p> <p>Clip wound to fully visualize wound (apply sterile KY jelly to exposed tissues to prevent hair from sticking to the wound)</p> <p>Gently hose and scrub with betadine, rinse well and dry area</p> <p>Apply antibiotic ointment or spray to scrapes or abrasions</p> <p>If on the lower leg, wrap with clean quilts or sheet cotton to keep dirt out</p>
Call Veterinarian:	<p>If there is a puncture through the skin over joints, tendon sheaths and bone</p> <p>If the skin edges of the wound can be separated</p> <p>If there is bone, muscle, tendon, joint capsule or tendon sheath exposed</p> <p>If there is any fresh or old wounds with pronounced lameness, swelling or fever</p> <p>If there is any doubt over the assessment of the wound</p> <p>*a wound that appears small on the surface of the skin could be just the opening to a very deep, long puncture wound</p>

Be able to tell the veterinarian when your horse received their last *Tetanus* vaccine

Bleeding

Symptoms:	A continuous flow of blood
First Aid:	<p>Apply pressure</p> <p>If attempting to bandage a lower leg, do not apply too tight, make sure bandage is well padded so as not to injure tendons</p> <p>Assess heart rate, respiratory rate, and temperature</p> <p>Try to keep horse calm</p>
Call Veterinarian:	<p>If the wound continues to bleed</p> <p>If the wound needs suturing</p>

Hives

Allergic Reaction

Symptoms:	Raised Welts, itching
First Aid:	Assess vital signs Bathe with gentle shampoo to remove possible irritants Bring into barn to get away from flies Give bute or banamine after veterinary recommendation Give antihistamines after veterinary recommendation Give steroids after veterinary recommendation
Call Veterinarian:	If signs of distress, i.e. increased respiratory rate or difficulty breathing If bumps are not regressing or increasing in size

Acute Episode of COPD

Heaves

Symptoms:	Increased difficult breathing Flared nostrils Increased respiratory rate Abdominal effort in breathing Extended neck Anxious
First Aid:	If inside, bring out into fresh air If outside, bring in a cool, well ventilated area In summer, cool down with sponge bath Assess heart rate, respiratory rate, and temperature Give antihistamines after veterinary recommendation Give steroids after veterinary recommendation
Call Veterinarian:	At the appearance of clinical signs

Dystocia

Symptoms:	Second stage of labor (delivery of foal) over 15 minutes
First Aid:	<p>If the fetal membranes appear first, tear them open so that the foal can be seen</p> <p>If you see two legs and a nose, you can apply gentle traction to the legs</p>
Call Veterinarian:	<p>If in labor over 15 minutes</p> <p>If you see just one leg, two legs without a nose, a nose without any legs, one leg and a nose</p>

Retained Placenta

Symptoms:	Unpassed fetal membranes (third stage of labor) over 3 hours
First Aid:	<p>Take whatever tissues are exposed and tie them in a knot if it hangs below the hocks so it will not be stepped on and torn</p> <p>Assess heart rate, respiratory rate, and temperature</p> <p>Walk or slowly jog the mare</p>
Call Veterinarian:	<p>If the placenta is still retained after a total of 3 hours</p> <p>If the mare's heart rate, respiratory rate, and temperature are elevated</p> <p>If the mucous membranes are not normal pink</p> <p>If placenta tears or does not come out complete</p>

Emergency Kit

Stethoscope	Card with emergency numbers
Thermometer	911/EMT/Fire/Police
Clippers	Veterinarian
Scissors	Farrier
Flashlight	Owner home/work
Lead rope with chain	another person who can make decisions
Long cotton rope	Insurance Company (if horse is insured)
Blanket or sheet for horse	Person with trailer who can transport
Quilts/sheet cottons	
Leg wraps/polos	
Hoof Pick	
Clean bath towels	Health record with:
Hot/cold pack	Normal resting TPRs
Roll cotton	Vaccination and Deworming histories
Dose syringe/empty paste wormer tube	General health notes and recent weight
Bandage material: 4X4 gauze pads, roll gauze, vet wrap, duct tape	
Wound Cleansers: betadine scrub/solution, peroxide, alcohol	
Topical medications: antibiotic ointment, triple antibiotic eye ointment, eye wash-sterile saline, poultice paste	
Liniment/sweat, furacin spray	
Oral medications: bute tabs or paste, banamine paste, mineral oil, milk of magnesia/Pepto-Bismol/kaopectate,	
Electrolytes	

***DO NOT ADMINISTER ANY ORAL MEDICATIONS WITHOUT CONSULTING
A VETERINARIAN FIRST**

Equine Emergencies

"What to do until the vet gets there"

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