



COLIC AFTERCARE

After your horse has been treated for colic it is important to monitor signs carefully. Note attitude, water intake, passage of manure (consistency and amount) and gas, urination, gut sounds, gum color (pink is normal), hydration (check gum moisture and skin pinch on side of neck), and temperature (<101.0F). Look for any signs of discomfort such as pawing at ground, looking or kicking at belly, a distended or tucked-up abdomen, rolling, swishing tail frequently, or holding tail higher than normal. If your horse is exhibiting signs of discomfort, call your veterinarian.

Most horses drink 8-10 gallons of water per day. Horses that colic usually have a reduced water intake that may last several days. Warm, clean water should be provided for your horse – if the horse does not drink, try providing a bucket of electrolyte water **in addition** to the bucket of fresh water. The recipe for electrolyte water is 5 gallons water + 2 oz table salt + 1 oz “Lite” salt (potassium chloride, a combination of NaCl and KCl). If your horse is comfortable but not drinking the plain or electrolyte water, another way to hydrate your horse is to make a dilute bran mash (bran is purchased at the feed store). If your horse likes bran, mix 1 quart bran to 2 gallons of warm water in a flat plastic container and stir it well. If your horse will not eat it, try starting with a thicker mash and then add water as the horse eats it. Apple or carrot pieces, molasses, and/or applesauce can also be added. This can be given 2-3 times daily. If you are unable to get your horse to drink or if the skin pinch test is very slow, call your veterinarian. It is important for your horse to drink and pass manure before feeding significant amounts of hay. Do not feed grain for several days following a colic episode.

If your horse **is** drinking water and passing manure, feed approximately one quarter to one third the normal volume of hay that is normally fed in the morning. Gradually increase the volume of hay fed over the next few feedings, continuing to monitor water intake and manure. Walking your horse for 10-15 minutes several times a day will help improve gut motility as well as attitude. Turning him out in a paddock from 40 min to a few hours a day is also very helpful, however it must be a paddock where he or she has not access to grass or hay. Do not hesitate to call your veterinarian with any questions or concerns.

If your horse has had an episode of sand colic, it is very important that your horse continues to receive 1-2 cups of psyllium daily for **at least** 2 weeks to prevent recurrence. Metamucil ® contains a relatively small amount of psyllium and is not a good substitute for pure psyllium. Some horses resist eating psyllium. Adding molasses, applesauce, corn syrup, honey, apple or carrot pieces, or grain will sometimes encourage them to eat it. Check your horse's manure several times for sand before discontinuing psyllium treatment.

PREVENTION OF COLIC

- Feed at least 2 meals per day; 3 to 4 would be better if your horse does not have access to pasture.
- Deworming – consult us about parasite control. We recommend fecal egg counts on every horse twice a year.
- Provide fresh, clean water – warm it on cold days.
- Don't feed on the ground. Feed the horse in a stall with a dry floor if at all possible.
- Change diets, including different types of hay, **gradually** over several days.
- Avoid stemmy hay, especially in older horses and miniature horses.
- Feed the minimum amount of grain necessary – most horses do well on grass or timothy hay mix with a small amount of grain.
- Regular exercise – turn horses out as much as possible.
- Annual dental exams.

CHECKING MANURE FOR SAND

- Collect the equivalent of 6-7 fresh fecal balls. Make sure that you do not collect any dirt or sand from the ground with the sample.
- Place the sample in a large, clear, glass or plastic container. Add enough water to completely dissolve the sample. Agitate or mix the sample thoroughly.
- Look through the bottom of the container in good lighting to visualize the sand that has settled out of the sample.
- If the sample contains \geq one teaspoon of sand, this suggests that your horse is carrying a significant amount of sand, and requires treatment. A small amount of sand is normal.
- Some horses carrying significant amounts of sand will pass it in the stool intermittently. We suggest checking several samples for each horse.
- Regular fecal exams for sand at 4 month intervals.