

EMERGENCY HORSE CARE

Common clinical signs that may indicate that your horse requires veterinary assistance:

SUDDEN LAMENESS



CLINICAL SIGNS:

- Horse cannot bear weight or is noticeably lame on one (or more) limbs
- Horse is unwilling to move
- Horse camps out with front feet
- Horse appears braced or tender footed
- Horse has recent history of vaccination or intramuscular drug administration

WHAT TO DO:

- Avoid moving the horse
- Look for obvious heat/swelling in affected leg(s)
- Clean out foot and check for any nails or foreign objects. If nail is found DO NOT remove it
- Check feet for heat or increased digital pulse
- Call your veterinarian

SWOLLEN LEG

CLINICAL SIGNS:

- One (or more) leg may exhibit sudden swelling
- Lameness may or may not be present
- Horse may exhibit decreased appetite for food
- Check for swelling by comparing to opposite leg

WHAT TO DO:

- Take temperature
- Examine affected limb for cuts/scabs
- Refrain from moving horse if noticeably lame
- Cold hose or ice limb
- Apply standing bandage
- Call your veterinarian



COLIC



CLINICAL SIGNS:

- Horse may paw the ground, curl upper lip, look at belly or stretch out as if attempting to urinate
- May sweat or have labored/fast breathing
- May lay down or roll
- May exhibit signs of anxiety or depression
- May have decreased appetite or stop eating
- Some horses may become violent or exhibit severe agitation

WHAT TO DO:

- IF SAFE: take temperature, heart rate, respiratory rate, listen for abdominal sounds (see chart below)
- Start walking the horse in an open area with soft footing (if painful)
- Call your veterinarian

ALLERGIC REACTION

CLINICAL SIGNS:

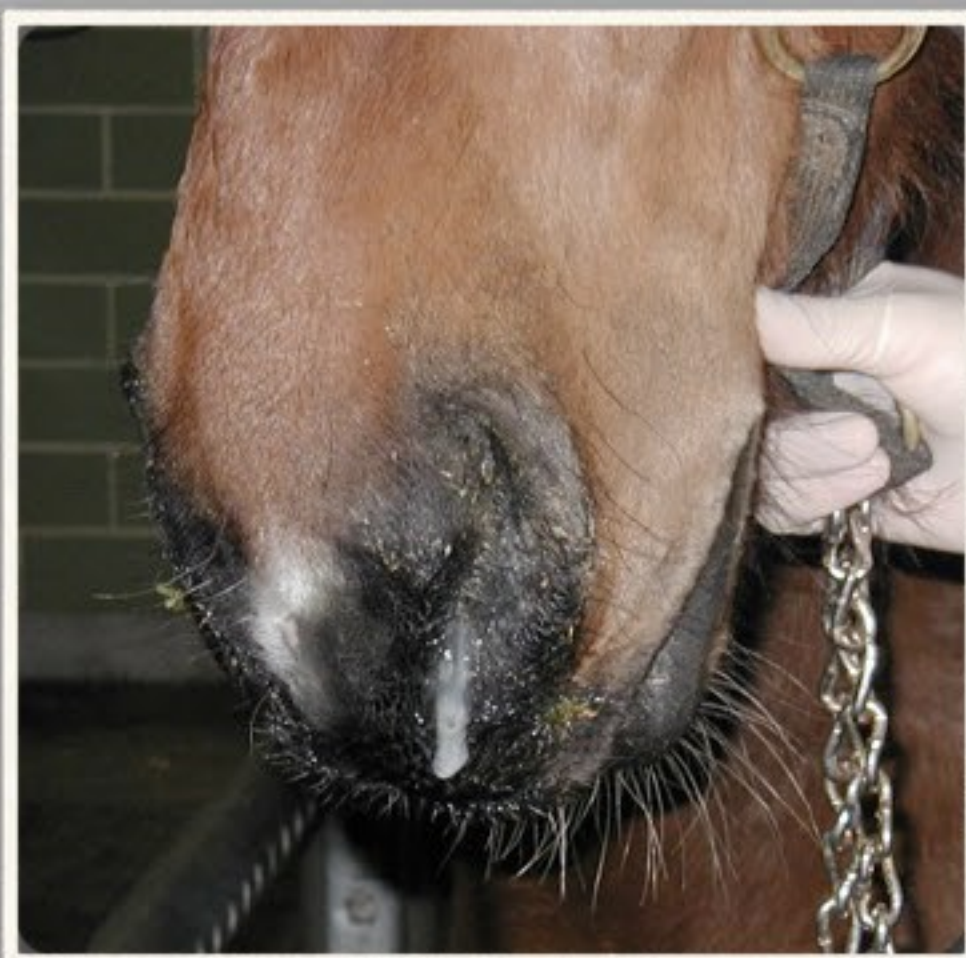
- Horse may exhibit hives
- May exhibit swelling at affected area in cases of infections or bites
- May become stiff or unwilling to move
- May have muzzle, eyelid, tongue, throat or sheath swelling
- May exhibit a snoring sound when breathing
- May be itchy or irritable

WHAT TO DO:

- Call your vet immediately especially if breathing difficulty or facial swelling
- Let your vet know if horse has recently had vaccinations, deworming, drug administration or exposure to environmental allergens
- If hives or local swelling are present, give horse a cold bath (no soap)
- Remove food
- Move to a cool location



NASAL DISCHARGE



CLINICAL SIGNS:

- Horse may have blood, pus (thick yellow discharge), feed material or saliva coming from one or both nostrils
- May also be coughing
- May be anxious and tossing head around excessively

WHAT TO DO:

- Take temperature
- Feel throat latch area, under jaw or underside of neck for palpable swelling or tenderness
- Remove food and water if discharge is food or horse is showing anxiety
- Keep horse as quiet as possible
- Quarantine from other horses and do not handle other horses until the affected horse is evaluated

DECREASED APPETITE

CLINICAL SIGNS:

- Horse may nose at feed or take a bite but not chew
- May eat hay but not grain (or vice versa)
- May exhibit excessive drooling or have a foul odor coming from the mouth

WHAT TO DO:

- Take temperature
- Check for presence of feces and evaluate consistency
- Remove food
- Note any additional abnormal behavior
- Check water consumption
- Call your veterinarian



WOUNDS



CLINICAL SIGNS:

- If excessive bleeding is present call your veterinarian immediately
- The affected area may be swollen
- Lacerations may vary in size and shape. Take note of size of laceration

WHAT TO DO:

- If bleeding, apply pressure to the area with a clean cloth and hold in place with a wrap. Don't remove until your veterinarian arrives. Note location of wound (i.e. over a joint, tendon or involving the eyelid)
- Take note of or investigate source of laceration (i.e. determine, if possible, how trauma occurred)
- Is the wound dirty? How old is the wound? Is there foreign debris in the wound?
- Call your veterinarian with above information
- Cold hose to clean if ok with your veterinarian
- Do not apply topical medications unless directed by your veterinarian
- Check tetanus vaccination history

EYE TRAUMA

CLINICAL SIGNS:

- Upper or lower eyelids may be swollen
- Horse may squint or appear to be in pain
- The eye/cornea may appear cloudy
- May have excessive tearing or discharge coming from the eye
- The horse may appear blind

WHAT TO DO:

- Call your veterinarian immediately
- Diseases of the eye can be serious and waiting to seek treatment can result in loss of vision or the eye itself



Normal
Vital Signs

Adult Horse

Newborn Foal

Temperature

98° – 101.5°F

99° – 102°F

Heart Rate

30 – 44 beats/min.

60 – 100 beats/min.

Respiratory Rate

8 – 16 breaths/min.

20 – 40 breaths/min.