

Equine Veterinary Medicine – Lynne Sparks, DVM

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Normal Exam Parameters

- Temperature 99.0-101.5 degrees (adult) 99.5-102 degrees (newborn)
- Pulse 24-44 bpm (adult) 80-100 bpm (newborn)
- Respiration 10-24 bpm (adult) 20-40 bpm (newborn)
- Mucus membranes – moist pink color

Colic – Colic means abdominal discomfort

Warning signs- pawing, rolling, laying down, yawning, stretching as if to urinate

Causes – gas, change in feed, infection, neoplasia, among others

Diagnosis – based on physical exam, abdominocentesis, abdominal ultrasound, nasogastric intubation, bloodwork, radiographs

Treatment- pain medication, sedatives, nasogastric intubation with fluids/electrolytes, IV fluids, abdominal surgery

Subsolar Abscess – aka. foot abscess, sand bed or gravel

Symptoms – lameness in one foot that may or may not have swelling in the lower limb, heat in hoof, sensitivity to pressure on the hoof or the coronet band, lameness that worsens over several days, often lameness will be confused with a broken leg

Treatment- soak in ice water for severe acute pain, soak in warm water and Epsom salt, pain medications, bandage hoof with drawing salve

Choke – feed stuck in the esophagus

Symptoms- nasal discharge from both nostrils usually slimy and or foamy with feed material present, coughing, gagging, laying down and rolling

Causes- poor dentition, eating too quickly, not chewing feed appropriately

Treatment –

By owner-

- Do not allow to eat or drink as aspiration can occur.
- Do not give medication by mouth.
- Massage the throat but usually the feed that is stuck is in the chest or as the esophagus enters the stomach.
- Encourage the horse to trot around for a short period of time
- Trailer the horse

Allergic Reaction- horses can be allergic to ANYTHING!!!!

Symptoms- hives, rapid respirations, sweating, colic, swelling

Causes – ANYTHING!!!!

Treatment – antihistamines, corticosteroids, epinephrine

Vaccinations – Begin vaccinating at 4-6 months of age. Most vaccinations require an initial booster in 3-4 weeks with the exception of botulism which is 3 doses given at monthly intervals. All vaccinations are recommended at least yearly. Influenza and Rhino should be boosted every 6 months if the horses travel year round.

Every horse:

- Influenza
- Rhinopneumonitis
- Eastern Equine Encephalitis
- Western Equine Encephalitis
- TETANUS
- West Nile
- Rabies

Optional

- Strangles- young horses in boarding barns or showing in circuits where the disease is prevalent
- Botulism – horses on poor quality hay or round bales or in endemic areas
- Leptospirosis – Appaloosa characteristic horses or any horse in endemic areas
- Potomac Horse Fever – any horse in endemic areas
- Rhinopneumonitis – vaccinate mares at 5,7 9 months pregnancy - #1 cause abortion late term

Dental –

Why – Horses are hypsodonts which means that their teeth grow continuously throughout their lives. The upper and lower teeth wear against each other to stay at a normal length. If the teeth do not meet up correctly the teeth or parts of the teeth can become overgrown causing difficulty chewing.

How often – Exam at least yearly, more frequently if there are issues

Cost – Average \$165-185 which includes the exam, sedative and float. Horses with major problems or that require a large amount of sedative will be more costly. Hoses should ALWAYS be sedated for the dental so that problems are not missed!

Parasites – Most common - Large Strongyles, Small strongyles, ascarids

Less common - Tapeworms, Bots, Eyeworms, Onchocerca, lungworms, Pinworms

Habronema, Threadworms

Dewormer – 4 classes – Lots of RESISTANCE!!!!

Benzimidazoles – Fenbendazole – Lg/sm strongyles, encysted cyathostomes, pinworms, ascarids

Oxibendazole – Lg/sm strongyles, large roundworms, pinworms, threadworm

Pyrantels – Pyrantel pamoate – lg/sm strongyles, pinworms, lg roundworms

Pyrantel Tartrate – Lg/sm strongyles, pinworms, hairworms, threadworms, stomach worms, lungworms, ascarids, summer sores, bots

Macrocyclic lactones- Ivermectin – Lg/sm strongyles, small bloodworms, ascarids, bots, threadworms, pinworms ,hairworms, lungworms, lg mouth stomach worms

Moxidectin – lg/sm strongyles, encysted cyathostomes, ascarids, hairworms, pinworms, large mouth stomach worms, bots, tapeworms

Praziquantel – Lg/sm strongyles, ascarids, hairworms, threadworms, stomach worms, lungworms, bots, pinworms, tapeworms

Have the veterinarian do fecal testing at least yearly to determine need for deworming.

Deworm for Bots in the fall after the last frost. Otherwise base your deworming schedule on veterinarian recommendations as each situation is different.

Topline – withers, back, loin, and croup. Strength of the topline musculature can influence soundness.

HennekeBody Scoring – 1-9 1 being extremely poor and 9 obese. Ideal – 4-6

6 Points to palpate:

- Along neck
- Along withers
- Crease down back
- Tail head
- Ribs
- Behind shoulder

Palpate each point, assign it a number. Add all 6 numbers then divide by 6 to reach the score.

BCS

1. Poor/Extremely Emaciated – Bones prominent across topline, pelvis and shoulders. No fatty tissue can be felt.
2. Very thin/Emaciated - Slight fat covers base of spinous processes, transverse processes rounded, prominent bones. Withers, shoulders and neck structures discernable slightly.
3. Thin – Fat buildup halfway up spinous processes, no transverse processes can be felt, Individual vertebrae cannot be felt but tail head prominent, Hip joints rounded but pelvis not easily distinguishable, Withers, shoulders and neck are accentuated.
4. Moderately thin – Slight ridge along back, Faint outline of ribs, Fat around tail head but tail head may still be prominent depending on conformation, Hip joints not discernable. Withers, neck and shoulders not obviously thin.
5. Moderate – Back is flat, ribs can be felt but not easily seen, Fat around tail head spongy, withers rounded.
6. Moderately Fleishy - Slight crease down back, Fat over ribs spongy, Soft fat around tail head, Fatty deposition around sides of neck and withers and behind shoulders
7. Fleishy - Slight crease down back. Noticeable filling of fat between ribs but ribs still palpable. Soft fat around tail head, Fatty deposition around withers, shoulders and neck.
8. FAT – Crease down back and difficult to feel ribs. Area behind shoulder filled with fat. Notably thickened neck. Fat deposition along inner thigh.
9. Extremely fat- Obvious crease down back. Fat over ribs. Bulging fat around tail head, withers, shoulders, and neck. Thighs rub together. Flanks filled with fat.

Sign of good Health/poor health – Shiny hair coat, bright alert attitude, good appetite, active, appropriate body condition, feet trimmed properly

How much should you prepare to pay for a farm call - On average, routine services done yearly by your veterinarian will cost between \$400-600 per year. This includes the annual exam, dental, fecal screen and vaccinations. Depending on distance from your veterinarian your farm call travel fee will influence your total amount spent as most veterinarians charge by the mile or have a set fee for each mileage range. Emergency visits and sick animal visits are routinely several hundred dollars for diagnostics and treatment.

How do you know if something is a true emergency- If you don't know call your vet. Excessive bleeding, difficulty foaling, getting into grain, colic, any eye issue, acute severe lameness, and not eating all warrant a call.

What should you do if a vet cannot come – BE PREPARED TO HAUL!!!!!! There are many veterinary facilities within a few hours drive that are open 24/7 for emergencies.

Vet etiquette –

- Make sure your horse is accessible.
- Make sure he is relatively clean if a procedure must be done on him.
- Have appropriate equipment ready.
- Have an appropriate area ready.
- Have medical background available for each horse.
- Know your horse!
- Don't use Dr. Google.
- Be there and pay attention.
- Don't be a vet hopper.
- Have payment available.
- Have water, electric and shelter available if needed.

First aid kit

- Vetwrap and quilt wraps
- Thermometer
- Scissors
- Diapers/maxi pads
- Epsom salt
- Antiseptic ointment
- Emergency numbers
- Emergency medications including syringes and needles
- Duct tape
- Flashlight
- Gauze 4x4
- Halter and lead rope
- Nitrile gloves
- Alcohol
- Sterile water
- Tweezers
- Twitch

How do you stop bleeding? You and the horse need to remain calm. Apply pressure to the wound. An animal can lose roughly 10% of its blood volume before it goes into shock. For a 1200 lb horse that is roughly 2 gallons.

Medicines to have on hand – Neosporin, Banamine, antihistamine

Laminitis – Inflammation of the lamina which is the soft tissue connection between the hoof wall and the bone inside the hoof, the coffin bone.

When the lamina weakens the coffin bone can shift either sinking down or rotating into abnormal position affecting the growth patterns of the foot and being extremely painful.

Always remember that when dealing with horses only one of you can freak out at any time and it's NEVER your turn!!!