

COLIC

We are sorry that you and your horse has experienced and episode of colic today. Your veterinarian has seen your horse and addressed the pain. Here are a few facts about colic and a few things to look out for on the road to recovery.

Colic is a broad term for abdominal pain; there can be many causes including non-intestinal pain (ovary/uterus, liver, kidney, etc). Intestinal colic can be due to many things, such as: excess gas in the intestines, impaction (like being constipated- can also be sand), obstructed (enterolith-stone in the colon), or twisted colon or small intestine.

Your veterinarian may have given pain medication (Banamine), or other analgesics including sedation to help calm the pain associated with colic. Other treatments include a rectal exam to try to identify the cause, and a nasogastric tube may have been passed so fluids and laxatives could be placed into the stomach. More diagnostics could be done such as a transabdominal ultrasound, or referral to a clinic for x-rays of the abdomen or intravenous/IV fluid administration, or surgery.

If your horse is comfortable after initial exam here is a list of things to do and watch for:

WHAT TO DO:

- 1.) Monitor for signs of colic about every 1-2 hours if possible: laying down, rolling, pawing at the ground, looking at the sides, not eating, and phelgmon response (lip in the air). CALL VET if you see these signs.
- 2.) Walk every 1-2 hours or what is reasonable. Walk for 10-15 minutes, this helps the gastrointestinal tract move food along and alleviate pain.
- 3.) Monitor for the passage of feces. If your horse was given oral laxatives via nasogastric tube, you should expect to see the oil pass in 24 hours on the feces. Oil in the feces looks very glistening.
- 4.) Feeding: It is best to allow as much fresh grass as possible. Some vets prefer only non-bulky feeds like bran mashes, or mashes of grain and water (one to one ratio). Adding salt to any bran mash is good to promote more water consumption. It is helpful to know how much your horse drinks, eats, and defecates; therefore it is best to keep your horse separated from other horses.

IF YOUR HORSE IS PAINFUL AFTER EXAM:

- 1.) Timing is everything! In the field we can manage colic medically by giving medications to control pain. If the medications we give does not control pain for 12 hours it is always necessary to consider referral to a surgical or 24 hour care facility.
- 2.) If you horse is painful after the initial exam within the 12 hour window, a second exam may be warranted, especially if your horse is not a surgical candidate. Options for treatment include more analgesic medications, and possibly IV fluid therapy, or we can leave sedatives with you to keep your horse comfortable. Pain may occur immediately, or in 4-6 hours, or between 6-12 hours. Call if your horse is showing signs!
- 3.) If you horse does not respond to medication in the field and is not comfortable with sedatives, and your horse is not a surgical candidate, it is important to consider euthanasia as an option.

Please call us at ANY time with ANY questions you may have and we can assist you with the best choices to make for your horse.

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