

Diarrhea in Horses

Diarrhea is a frustratingly common problem in the horse world and often leaves owners frequently washing their horses to keep them clean. There are a range of causes of diarrhea including stress, dietary intolerances, imbalances of the normal bacteria, metabolic disease (i.e. Cushings), infectious causes (i.e. parasites, bacteria, viruses), etc. Diarrhea can be coupled with various symptoms including colic, poor appetite, increased thirst, depression, weight loss, dehydration, poor coat, dull eyes, etc.

The work up below details a range of options to investigate and treat diarrhea. Depending on your horse's severity and frequency of diarrhea, your veterinarian can help guide you through these choices.

Full workup options for Diarrhea:

- 1.) Fecal parasite testing
- 2.) Cushing's disease testing - Endogenous ACTH is best tested in August/October, however this can be done throughout the year as needed
- 3.) CBC/Chem- Checking organ function and cellular defenses against inflammation/infection, low protein (lost from the gut lining), etc.
- 4.) Fecal test for Salmonella/C. diff/C. Perf - Negatives are common but can have chronic carriers.
- 5.) Gastric endoscopy for ulcers
- 6.) Abdominal radiographs for sand
- 7.) Biopsy for gut abnormalities - can be expensive and not representative of the entire GI tract
- 8.) Allergy testing - may need to go on allergy immunotherapy injections.
- 9.) Referral to Internal Medicine specialist, may include abdominal ultrasound

Possible Treatments:

Over the counter/homeopathic remedies

- 1.) Peppermint oils/extract to help reduce diarrhea
- 2.) Rolled Barley to help with diarrhea
- 3.) Smart Digest, Probios, or other probiotic with saccharomyces
- 4.) Magnesium supplement 10,000mg/day as a calming effect to reduce internal stressors
- 5.) Change to an all pelleted single grass hay diet (orchard grass hay pellets as sole diet, no other treatments, no rice bran, no stable mix, no supplements, etc)
- 6.) Daily supplement of Bio Sponge (Platinum Performance product) to effect
- 7.) Selenium - Platinum Performance supplement
- 8.) Mares Magic - dried red raspberry leaf/platinum
- 9.) Assure Gold- Supplement with Psyllium and other gastric support items.
- 10.) Psyllium, and or Beet pulp for sand
- 11.) Try Succeed or Equishure as a hind gut buffer/gastric ulcer protection
- 12.) Make sure new hay is transitioned slow and well

Veterinary Treatments/Interventions

- 1.) Up to date dental exam and float
- 2.) Deworm based on fecal worm egg counts and frequency of deworming
- 3.) Prednisone 1-2mg/kg by mouth, daily
- 4.) Metronidazole 15mg/kg by mouth, TID for 7 days
- 5.) Fecal transplant (transfaunation)



Please feel free to call us with any questions!

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