



EQUINE FIRST AID

WHAT TO HAVE AND HOW TO USE IT

PLAN AND PREPARE

Depending on where you are riding or packing, in the event of an equine emergency, it may take several hours or longer for your stock to be treated by a veterinarian. You should plan and prepare to be on your own in caring for your injured stock for several hours or longer.

If you are traveling away from home, create and take with you a list of several local large animal veterinary hospitals that could treat your stock, in the event of a medical emergency. Include the hospital name, address, phone numbers and directions (if you do not have GPS).

Prepare a complete equine first aid kit for your trailer or packing, and a smaller one to take on the trail in your saddlebags. You will need the supplies necessary to stabilize your stock in the event of an emergency, until a veterinarian is available to take over your animal's care.

EQUINE FIRST AID

- Trail Kit
- Betadine solution
- Betadine scrub
- Electrolytes
- Neosporin
- Nolvasan
- Saline solution
- *Ace (acetylpromazine)
- *Banamine
- *Bute (phenylbutazone)
- *Dex (dexamethasone)
- Hydrogen peroxide
- Topical eye ointment
- Emergency blanket
- Paper and waterproof
- Flashlight/light sticks
- Stethoscope
- Bandage scissors
- Standing wraps
- Rolls of sheet cotton
- Easy Boot
- Vetwrap or Elastikon
- Hoof pick
- Duct tape
- Sharp knife
- Sterile gauze pads (4" x 4")
- Gauze rolls
- Latex gloves
- Cell phone (realize it quite possibly will not work)
- ¾" – 1" hose (to keep nostrils open in a snake bite)
- Equine rectal thermometer
- Sanitary napkins (to stop bleeding)
- Fly repellent

NORMAL HORSE VITAL SIGNS

- **Temperature:** 99 – 101 F
- **Pulse:** 30 – 42 beats per minute
- **Respiration:** 12 – 20 breaths per minute
- **Capillary Refill (gums):** 2 seconds or less
- **Skin pinch test (hydration):** should snap back immediately
- **Mucous membranes of gums:** should be pink (not pale/white or blue/purple)

Learn the "normal" vital signs for each of your stock. Record the normal vital signs for each of your stock animals at rest and include this list in each first aid kit. Learn how to take your horse's vital signs.

IF AN EQUINE EMERGENCY OCCURS

- Stay calm and do not panic.
- Gather your animal's vital signs and other information to give to the vet.
- Call the veterinarian or send someone to seek help.
- Keep the horse as quiet and still as possible.
- Enlist help from others before evaluating or treating a sick or injured animal.
- Evaluate the location and severity of the illness or injury.

Prevention
is not good luck,



it's good management!

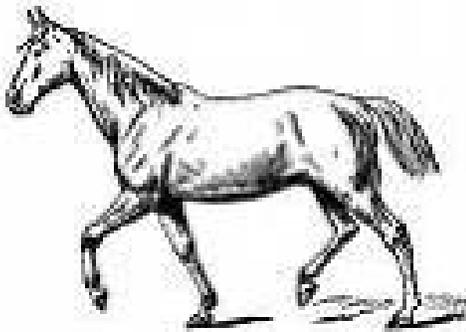
*These prescription medications should be obtained from your veterinarian, along with specific instructions on how and when to administer each.

COLIC

Colic is a general term for pain in the gut of a horse or mule. Colic is the number one cause of death in the equine world. It has many causes and its symptoms range from mild to fatal. You cannot look at a horse at the beginning of a colic episode and accurately assess the severity of the situation.

If you observe the symptoms of colic in your stock:

1. Note and write down the time initial symptoms were observed.
2. Contain the horse in an area free of manure for observation.
3. Remove all feed, but leave water available.
4. Take and record your horse's vital signs.
5. Consult with a vet by telephone, if possible.
6. Be prepared to immediately transport your stock to veterinary care, if necessary.



TYING UP OR AZOTURIA

Symptoms of "tying up" may include: sudden reluctance or inability to move; excessive sweating; resting heart rate over 60 BPM; resting respiration rate over 30 BPM; hard, tense hindquarter muscles; a painful and stiff gait and swishing tail. "Tying up" is exercise-related muscle degeneration due to the build-up of lactic acid in the blood, resulting in severe cramping and pain. If you notice these signs, stop and dismount immediately. To continue moving your horse may cause further muscle damage. Do not attempt to walk your horse out of it. Prescription medications may be administered under the orders of a vet. Horses that have tied up once are prone to do so again. Consult with your vet about conditioning and diet factors that may help to prevent tying up.

ELECTROLYTE IMBALANCE OR DEHYDRATION

Tying up that occurs well into a ride may be associated with electrolyte imbalance or dehydration. This condition needs to be addressed differently than azoturia. Keep the horse moving to avoid cramping and attempt to correct any imbalances that have occurred.

CUTS, LACERATIONS, ABRASIONS, PUNCTURES, ROPE BURNS

First, evaluate the wound or injury carefully. If there is enough loss of blood, a horse may go into shock. Stopping profuse bleeding is extremely important. To stop profuse bleeding:

1. Start with an inch-thick wad of clean gauze, a whole roll of gauze or a sanitary napkin and press that on the wound.
2. Wrap a roll of gauze to keep the initial wad in place.
3. Then add a layer of padding (sheet cotton, standing wrap or a towel).
4. Hold that in place with Vetwrap or Elastikon.
5. If the wound bleeds through, DO NOT remove the bandage! Instead, add more pressure with another layer of gauze pads and another snug layer of Elastikon or Vetwrap.

If your stock suffered a puncture wound, flush the wound with dilute Betadine solution and consult with your vet as soon as possible. If an animal's eye is injured, seek veterinary care immediately.

LAMENESS AND HOOF INJURIES



If your horse or mule suddenly becomes lame, you must assess the degree of lameness to see if the stock can continue on.

Any equine, unable to bear its own weight, should be evaluated by a veterinarian as soon as possible. All other

lameness should be evaluated to see if you can identify the source of the problem. Always carry an Easy Boot or other shoe replacement, in the event of a shoe lost on the trail.

- Carefully evaluate your animal's lame leg, looking for heat, swelling and obvious wounds.
- Check the foot for rocks or debris and remove any you find.
- If you find a nail, call your vet before removing it. The vet may want to evaluate the injury before removing the nail.
- If you find heat or swelling and you feel qualified to put on a correct wrap, apply a support bandage. You can cause more damage with an incorrectly applied wrap.
- If your horse refuses to bear weight on the limb, keep him still and send someone for help. Continued exercise on a severe injury can cause permanent damage.