

Psyllium and Sand Colic Prevention

COLIC

Colic in horses is a painful and sometimes deadly abdominal condition. There are a number of causes including ulcers, parasites, foreign objects and intestinal blockage (impaction). The many twists, turns and “kinks” in a horse’s intestinal tract make even healthy horses naturally prone to an attack. Colic is one of the most emotionally draining afflictions for all concerned. The intense, prolonged suffering of the horse, the usual late-night timing of the attacks, the expense and uncertainty of some treatments all combine to make this a highly stressful condition.

SIGNS

Colic is the most common medical condition encountered by horse owners. Signs can vary greatly from one horse to the other. The most common signs of pain include:

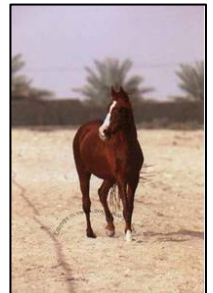
- Turning head toward the flank
- Kicking or biting the abdomen
- Standing frequently as if to urinate
- Rolling
- Sitting in a dog-like position
- Lying down more than usual
- Getting up and lying down repeatedly
- Putting head down to water without drinking
- Lack of bowel movements
- Absence of/or reduced digestive sounds
- Lip curling
- Pawing at the ground

The key here is awareness - Recognizing a potential issue or even a concern over something that doesn't seem right should be looked at. Time is of the essence. When in doubt call your Vet.

PREVENTION

The good news is that, with many recent advances, colic is frequently not only curable, but preventable. Recent research, observation, and a little horse sense have given us a much better understanding of how to treat colic correctly at its earliest stages. Better still, much of what can be done to prevent colic is easy and virtually cost-free. The following information gives general guidelines, and is not intended to take the place of your veterinarian’s advice or treatment. We hope you will find it useful, and any comments or suggestions will be welcome. Our goal remains to help you receive the greatest possible enjoyment from being a horse owner.

- 1. Change your thinking from treatment to prevention.** Prevention, Prevention, Prevention. Start with your veterinarian. All horses should be on a continuing program of parasite control, and receive regular fecal examinations. Your vet may also be able to spot stable, field or feeding conditions that could unnecessarily lead to colic.
- 2. Feed less, more frequently.** Now that a number of causes of colic have become better understood and controlled, Feed Management is seen as the next most important advance. Man, attempting to change nature to fit his own lifestyle, usually feeds his horse twice a day. Unfortunately, nature hasn’t caught on yet. Horses in their natural state nibble throughout most of their waking hours, so their stomachs are never full or empty. It is important to come as close to reproducing these conditions as possible. If you can’t adjust your schedule or buy a continuous feeding device, try to keep on a 12-hour schedule. Never overfeed, even if you’re late on a feeding; Saturday night colic is common because owners who sleep in on Saturday morning sometime over-compensate for starving their horse.
- 3. Limit ground feeding.** Sand and dust are major causes of impaction colic. Animals fed on the ground are more likely to take in sand and dust, which can create a very stubborn blockage. Additionally, ground fed horses can ingest all kinds of foreign objects (wood, rocks, etc.), a source of abdominal enteroliths.
- Increase water.** Fluid therapy (re-hydration) has been effective in helping to restore motility. Water as a preventive against impaction colic is now widely appreciated. Be sure there is always a fresh supply of water available, especially in hot or freezing weather. This is not only essential for normal digestive function, but as an aid in flushing out sand and dust.
- 5. Don’t exercise immediately after feeding.** The problem mentioned previously of feeding large amounts is compounded when followed too quickly by exercise. Blood that should be flowing to the intestinal tract for digestion is instead diverted to the muscle
- 6. Get dental check ups.** Horses unable to properly chew their food will be more prone to impaction. While a horse of any age may have this problem, older horses especially need to have their teeth checked often.



7. Keep worming. Parasites, as a cause of colic and other problems, have been brought under much greater control in just the last few decades. Consult your vet about your worming program, and be sure regular fecal examinations are administered. In the event of colic, these precautions should give you a fair degree of assurance that parasites are not the cause.



8. Feed a high quality diet. As mentioned previously, Feed Management is a major key to preventing colic. A high percentage of roughage to grain should be maintained. Ideally, roughage should be made available 24 hours a day. Overfeeding with grain produces excess gas, which can be especially troublesome in horses that already tend to be colicky. Concentrate should be given in limited quantities, starting from birth. Providing a combination of oat hay and alfalfa hay will allow the horse to nibble all day, switching from one to the other. Horses fed in lush pastures do better, but even a well-managed farm can have problems if it is fairly crowded.

Sudden and complete changes of diet are, of course, to be avoided.

9. Know your farm – and your horses. Some farms have a high number of colic cases, while others have virtually none. All owners, but especially absentee owners, need to look carefully and thoroughly at the conditions and management of their farm. Get first-hand information to be sure that feeding schedules are regular, exercise routines are being followed, fresh water is always available, highest quality feed is used – in short, all that you think is happening is indeed happening. When it is finally necessary to call in the vet, a thorough knowledge of your farm and the affected horse is going to be most helpful in getting a quick diagnosis and appropriate treatment.

10. Trot briskly for 10 – 15 minutes. When it appears your horse is suffering from colic, this is something you can do before calling the vet, or while waiting for his/her arrival, that won't take long. The mild physical jolting from trotting is often all that's needed to relieve an impaction. The effect is similar to a trailer ride to the vet from which the patient arrives already cured. Traditional all-night walks are far less effective (and more exhausting for you).

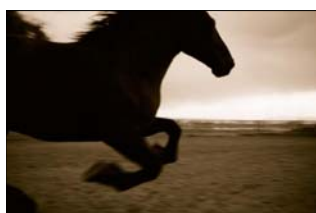


11. Call your vet early. It's always better to be safe than sorry. Having a horse examined in a timely manner by a professional, or transported if necessary, often means the difference between life and death. When the vet arrives, a review of conditions on the farm, the horse's history, and all causes for the attack may be necessary; so be prepared with the information. Obviously, the earlier in the crisis you get help; the less your decision for treatment will be based on emotion and panic. A survival rate as high as 95% for even serious cases is attributed in part to early referral.

12. Give Equisyl Advantage Regularly. This all-natural fiber made from Psyllium Hydrophillic Mucilloid is most effective when included as a regular part of your colic prevention program. Especially beneficial against impaction, this highly soluble fiber forms a lubricating gel by drawing water from your horse's system and using it to gently flush out sand and dust. Because Equisyl Advantage uses a pharmaceutical grade psyllium you can be confident that you are giving your horse a top quality product. This highest grade of psyllium produces a swell volume that exceeds all USP requirements and providing a constant supply of fresh water will assure the maximum, beneficial effect of Equisyl Advantage.

PSYLLIUM

Psyllium is a soluble fiber that comes from a plant most commonly grown in India and becomes gelatinous and sticky in water. It is broken down in the large bowel and becomes a food source for the bacteria that live in the colon. These healthy bacteria bulk up the stool, creating larger softer stool which is easier to pass. Psyllium comes in many **grades** and is used in many ways from



pharmaceutical grade to commercial grades. Only Pharmaceutical and Food grade Psyllium is subject to FDA USP testing standards and regulations. This means that products falling into these categories have the heavy metals extracted and are tested free of salmonella and e-coli types of bacteria. Equisyl Advantage is made of Pharmaceutical grade psyllium.

Advantage has been recommended by veterinarians for over 15 years in the treatment and prevention of Sand Colic. Many have tried other Psyllium products and returned to Equisyl Advantage as they find it works best. Many cite the ease of feeding Equisyl Advantage as compared to other products.

Three tablespoons a week in your horse's feed is all that's required. It is the best of science and nature combined to give superior care for your horse.

For more information on Equisyl Advantage, call 1-800-689-7601 or visit us at www.equisyl.com.