

# Horses & Colic

Few words strike more fear in the mind of a horse owner than “colic”. Colic is one of the leading causes of death in horses but prompt veterinary care can reduce that risk.

If you see your horse showing these signs, be sure to call your veterinarian right away. Not every colic requires a vet visit, but early, frequent communication with your vet is key to the best possible outcome.

- ✓ Paws at the ground
- ✓ Sweats
- ✓ Acts restless
- ✓ Lies down, rolls or thrashes
- ✓ Kicks at their abdomen area
- ✓ Looks at their sides



## Changes in Vital Signs



### INCREASED BREATHING

**NORMAL:** 12-20 breaths per minute  
**MODERATE/SEVERE:** >30 breaths per minute



### INCREASED CAPILLARY REFILL TIME

**NORMAL:** <2 seconds  
**MODERATE/SEVERE:** >3 seconds



### CHANGE IN GUT SOUNDS

**NORMAL:** Sounds on both sides of abdomen  
**MODERATE/SEVERE:** Decreased to no sounds



### CHANGE IN FECAL CONSISTENCY

**NORMAL:** 6-10 manures/24 hours, moist formed fecal balls  
**MODERATE/SEVERE:** Small, hard feces, constipation or profuse diarrhea



### TEMPERATURE CHANGES

**NORMAL:** 99-101.5°F  
**MODERATE/SEVERE:** Under 99 or over 101°F



### ELEVATED HEART RATE

**NORMAL:** 38-44 beats per minute  
**MODERATE/SEVERE:** >60 beats per minute



### CHANGES IN GUM COLOR

**NORMAL:** Light pink  
**MODERATE/SEVERE:** Brick red



### PASSING GAS

**NORMAL:** Yes  
**MODERATE/SEVERE:** No

**ASPCA** PET HEALTH INSURANCE



ASPCA® Pet Health Insurance Program for Horses includes coverage for equine colic.\* Get a free quote or enroll today at [www.ProtectYourHorse.com](http://www.ProtectYourHorse.com).



Contact your veterinarian if you suspect your horse has colic.

For quick reference, store this handout with your first aid materials or post around your barn or boarding facility.

VETERINARIAN PHONE NUMBER

Chart Source: Crabbe, Barb (June, 2002) Colic Symptoms Checklist for Horses ([www.equisearch.com](http://www.equisearch.com)).

\*For Horse Plans: Product not available in all states. Subject to underwriting. For all terms and conditions visit [aspcapetinsurance.com/more-info/sample-plans-for-horses](http://aspcapetinsurance.com/more-info/sample-plans-for-horses).

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