



# Focus on Colic

Finding your horse suffering from the symptoms of colic is one of the biggest concerns for any horse owner. Colic can range from a mild discomfort to extreme abdominal pain and while a mild case can resolve on its own, severe cases often require surgery or could even tragically lead to the loss of life.

If you think your horse is suffering from colic, it's important to call your vet immediately. What seems to be a mild case can end up needing surgery and, on the other hand, some severe cases can be resolved within an hour of veterinary care. In most cases your vet will advise you to walk the horse and keep him moving while they travel to your yard.

It's best to walk your horse on a lunge line in an enclosed area with a soft surface so that if your horse wants to roll, it can do so. The handler should wear a hat and gloves, even the kindest of horses can forget their stable manners when in pain!

## Causes of colic

Colic can be instigated by a number of different causes ranging from the stress of an injury to simple changes in management including:

- Change in diet or feeding times
- Change of stabling routine
- Change in exercise level
- Worm burden
- Teeth problems

## Symptoms include:

- Pawing or scraping the ground
- Turning to look at the abdomen ('flank watching')
- Restlessness - getting up and down frequently
- Frequent attempts to urinate
- Rolling
- Increased pulse and high temperature

## Prevention of Colic

While it isn't possible to prevent colic in all instances, there are some simple procedures you can build into your routine that will help reduce the likelihood of it occurring:



### Feeding

- Make sure your horse has a constant supply of clean water
- Feed him little and often
- Introduce dietary changes gradually



### Health care

- Make sure your horse has regular health checks
- Keep his teeth rasped
- Follow an effective and appropriate worming program
- Regularly poo pick your paddock to reduce worm contamination



### Routine

- Horses love routine so aim not to make big changes in his routine
- A change in the amount of exercise should be gradual
- Reduce stress from a long show season and crowded paddocks by having relaxed hacks and days in the field