

Stall Talk – First Aid

A review of management tips for the horse owner.

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“So Doc, my horse cut his leg the other day and I didn’t know whether or not to call so I”

If you own, work with, or work around horses, you quickly appreciate their affinity for finding ways to get hurt. Some horses, like some people, tend to be accident prone. The goal of this bulletin is to provide you the information needed to handle the situation on your own and to know what materials to have on hand until vet service can arrive. In any situation, call for advice even if you feel comfortable treating the situation yourself. Some injuries may appear small and simple, but even a small abrasion or puncture can be serious if at a bad location.

Vital Signs – Adult horse

Rectal Temperature – 98.5 - 101.5 F
Pulse/Heart Rate – 28 - 44 beats per minute
Respiration – 8-16
Mucous Membrane – pale pink
Capillary refill time – less than 2 seconds
Gut sounds – present on both sides

Emergency Kit

Thermometer
Bandage material – 4x4 gauze, non-stick (Telfa) pad, sheet cotton/cotton leg wrap, cling gauze, vet wrap, elastikon, duct tape
Antiseptics - chlorohexidine or iodine solution & scrub, antibiotic ointment or cream
Medications – Banamine, Bute, or antibiotics as prescribed to have on hand if necessary

Basic First Aid

Wounds:

- Control Bleeding – use bandage or apply direct pressure
- Clean contaminated wounds with lots of clean water and antiseptic solution
- Pay special attention to location and depth of wounds, especially if any puncture is near a joint

Lameness:

- Look for heat and swelling
- Apply cold compress/hose 15-20 min
- Minimize swelling, support and immobilize with a bandage if needed
- Rest

Colic:

- Mild to Moderate pain- obtain vital signs then call for assistance/advice
- No Food – Walk 10-15 min, Rest 30 min
- Lying is Okay, but to prevent further injury, do not allow rolling
- Severe or Unrelenting Pain – Call NOW

Eye Problem:

- Clean/Flush with saline or water
- Cold compress if swollen
- Notice if eyelids or the eye itself is involved and call for advice