

Equine Emergencies Fact Sheet

There are two broad categories of critical equine cases. True emergency cases require prompt intervention by your veterinarian, therefore please phone immediately. Urgent cases are conditions that should be seen within the same day, but do not have the same urgency as true emergencies. It is possible for urgent cases to develop into true emergencies, so please monitor horses with conditions that qualify closely.

When dealing with an equine emergency, it is very important to remain calm. Doing so will enable you to clearly relay the situation to your veterinarian and carry out any instructions they give you.

Secondly it is just as important to ensure both people and horses involved stay safe. Injured or colicky horses can be panicked which can result in their having exaggerated and unexpected responses. Take extra care when handling these horses.

Emergency Cases Include:

- Severe colic
- Large lacerations with accompanying blood loss
- Severe anaphylactic reactions with sudden onset of respiratory distress
- Any difficulty while foaling (dystocia)
- Catastrophic injuries that will likely require prompt euthanasia

Urgent Cases Include:

- Mild Colic
- Lacerations
- Swollen, painful eyes
- Lameness
- Depressed, febrile horse
- Severe hives

Basic vitals can often provide your veterinarian with valuable information. If it is safe to do so, obtain vital parameters you are familiar with prior to phoning your veterinarian, but don't delay making that call in a true emergency.

Basic Vital Parameters

Temperature:	37-38 ⁰ C
Heart Rate:	24-48 beats per minute
Respiratory Rate:	8-20 breaths per minute
Mucous Membranes:	pink, moist