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Triple R Equine Welfare

Your First Aid Kit

Information Sheet No. 2



What Do I Need To Know?

If you own or are considering purchasing or leasing a horse, it is essential that you have some basic first aid knowledge. Several organizations provide equine first aid training and knowledge of human first aid can be helpful in an emergency.

During your time as a horse owner, it is highly likely that you will need to attend to both urgent and minor injuries. Even in the event that you have access to swift veterinary attention, your knowledge and access to appropriate equipment could mean the difference between life and death for your horse.

Accordingly, it is critical that you invest in a well stocked equine first aid kit. First aid kits can be purchased pre-packaged or you can create your own, ensuring that it is kept in a waterproof container and is easy to access.

Note that many medications need to be refrigerated, spoil in extreme heat or cold and/or have expiry dates. Make a point of checking the expiry dates of all medications regularly. Also consider having multiple first aid kits - one for your tack room and another that you take when travelling with your horse.

Remember that a first aid kit is not a replacement for skilled veterinary care. Get to know your local vet and always have their phone number at hand.

Finally, to ensure the long term well being of your horse, purchase horse insurance to help cover emergency veterinary costs, or save a weekly amount in a bank account specifically to cover medical bills.

When Should I Call A Vet?

If you are in doubt, call your vet. The NSW Department of Primary Industries notes the following as being among the signs of illness or injury for which veterinary treatment should be sought. Note that this list is not exhaustive.

- Nasal discharge
- Coughing
- Lameness
- Fits or staggering
- Bleeding, swelling or ulcerating of body parts
- Runny or inflamed eyes
- Laboured breathing
- Inability or reluctance to stand or walk
- Severe diarrhea
- Apparent pain
- Unexplained weight loss
- Inability to urinate or defecate
- Repeated or continuous rolling or pawing
- Poor appetite
- Dropping food or chewing with difficulty
- Repeated or continuous kicking at abdomen or sweating
- Excessive scratching or hair loss
- Distress during work

Additionally, eye injuries should always be attended to by a vet, including those related to grass seeds

Remember:

- Don't panic and keep your horse calm to prevent additional injury
- Early treatment can prevent the development of more serious issues
- Horses are prey animals and accordingly will rarely display overt signs of pain
- Don't use medications or unsterilized equipment to treat multiple horses - you risk the spread of disease.
- It is your responsibility to be aware of the signs of equine distress and ill health - some of which may be subtle

Contents of Your First Aid Kit - A Guide**First Aid Reference Materials**

Equine first aid book (see "Recommended Reading" for suggestions)

Bandages and Dressings

- Multiple elastoplast bandages:
 - Adhesive;
 - Non-adhesive;
 - and Elastic
- Multiple wound dressings:
 - Gamgee; and
 - Non-stick
- Bandaging tape
- Cotton gauze/stretch gauze/crepe bandage
- Large roll cotton wool
- Cotton wool balls
- Ear buds

**Medical Equipment**

- Rectal thermometer
- Petroleum/lubricating jelly
- Sterile scissors
- Sterile syringes (5ml, 10ml, 20ml, 60ml)
- Sterile/disposable needles for injections
- Disposable gloves/rubber gloves
- Small pair of tweezers or forceps
- Sterile containers for mixing treatments/cleansing
- Scalpel blade, sterile
- Stethoscope
- Pre-injection swabs

Wound, Hoof and Sprain Treatments

- Antiseptic wash
- Antiseptic lotions/sprays (eg Betadine, Cetrigen)
- Wound powder, spray or cream (eg Lotagen gel/spray, Flints Oil)
- Anti-inflammatory/analgesic gel (eg DMSO)
- Poultices (eg Animalintex)
- Ice pack/s (instant icepacks are available)
- Hoof pick and knife
- Hoof dressing (eg Stockholm tar)
- Hoof boots
- Dermacleanse
- Liniment
- Plastic squeeze bottle (wound flushing)
- Shoe removal kit

**Eye Treatment**

- Eye wash solution
- Saline solution
- Eye ointment
- Eye pads

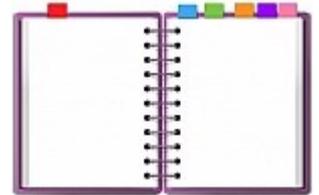
**Medications**

- Tetanus Antitoxin and Tetanus Toxoid booster (speak to your vet, keep refrigerated)
- Penicillin (speak to your vet, keep refrigerated)
- Bute (Phenylbutazone is used for pain relief, speak to your vet)
- Sedazine/Ace (sedatives, speak to your vet)
- Electrolyte powder
- Epsom salts
- Glycerine

Other Useful Equipment

- Disinfectant
- Assorted bucket/s and containers
- Chux/wipes/old towels
- Pliers and wire cutters
- Human first aid kit
- Syringe disposal container
- Rubbish bag for bandages/waste
- Torch and spare batteries
- Fly repellent
- Electric clippers
- Spray bottle
- Pinetarsol
- Twitch

Tips, Reading & Resources



Useful Tips

Note: Consult your vet prior to undertaking any course of treatment for your horse

Record: Keep a record of your horses health including dates and what medications were give.

Head collar and lead rope: Always carry these in your car when travelling with your horse

Hay twine: Have it on hand for emergency situations

Voice commands: Train your horse to respond to voice commands

Halterless leading: In the event of a head injury, it is useful to have trained your horse to be led by a piece of twine, a scarf, shirt, even by a hank of hair or chin whiskers

Disposable nappies, sanitary pads or incontinence pads: These make excellent bandages in an emergency

Rescue Remedy: A few drops may help to calm you and your horse

Styrofoam cups filled with water: Keep them in the freezer to be used as icepacks

Salt: Dissolve it in water to cleanse wounds

Sulphur: Feed additive to help treat hoof thrush

Sulphur & Lard Mix: Can help to treat mud fever, cleanse and heal wounds, help prevent proud flesh and strengthen soft skin in areas where a horse may be prone to girth sores

Peroxide: Keep it on hand to be diluted 10:1 with water to flush hoof abscesses and infections - leave for 10 minutes and then rinse away

Pinetarsol: Useful remedy for rain scald or mild irritations

Duct tape/masking tape: Use on top of hoof bandaging to keep it in place temporarily if you have no hoof boot/s on hand

Emu oil, aloe vera gel or tea tree oil: Helpful in treating small, non-infected cuts and swellings

Glad wrap/foil: Wrap around bandaging or ice to keep it in place

Recommended Reading

“Hands-On Horse Care: The Complete Book of Equine First Aid”: Karen EN Hayes DVM MS

“A-Z of Horse Diseases and Health Problems”: Tim Hawcroft B.V.Sc. (Hons) M.A.C.C.Sc., M.R.C.V.s.

Horse Trust - First Aid for Horses: www.horsetrust.org.uk

Sources

Triple R Equine Welfare Members

NSW Department of Primary Industries

Horse Data Website



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