

Horse Ailments



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As we all know, horses and ponies need lots and lots of love and special care.

But, even well-cared for horses may become poorly at some point in their lives.

Because horses cannot talk to us, it's really important that us humans can spot when an equine is feeling unwell.

In this special feature you can learn about four different illnesses that an equine might suffer from.



Colic

Colic is like a *horse version of a stomach ache*. When a horse has a stomach ache, it is more painful than when a human has one. In some serious cases, *a horse's intestines (a body organ that processes food) can become twisted*.

Colic can be caused by many different things, like *a sudden change in diet, or by dehydration* (which is when a horse is very thirsty) To stop a horse from getting colic, it's really important to remember that they are much more sensitive, when it comes to food, than a human is. *A horse needs to eat the same food every day, and have access to water all the time*.



Common Symptoms

Not wanting to eat
Looking at its belly
Sweating for no reason
Laying down

Common Symptoms

A snotty nose
Weepy eyes
High temperature
Swellings around the throat

Strangles

Strangles is a disease caused by nasty *germs that attack a horse's breathing system*. It's a little bit like when a human has a bad case of flu. It is *very contagious*, which means that a horse can easily pass it on to another horse. If a horse gets strangles, *it's very important that the horse does not come into contact with other horses*.

As strangles is caused by germs, it's really important to be hygienic so that *the germs don't spread*. For example, disinfect your hands if you go from one yard to another.



If you think your horse has any of these illnesses then please phone a vet!

Cushing's Disease

Cushing's disease is different to the other three illnesses in this feature, because it cannot be cured. There is a gland in a horse's brain that controls something called 'cortisol'. *Cortisol controls a horse's temperature and helps to heal injuries and other illnesses*. When a horse has Cushing's disease, it makes too much cortisol.

Although Cushing's disease cannot be cured, *it can be managed so that the symptoms don't get worse too quickly*.

A vet can diagnose Cushing's disease and will give lots of advice on appropriately caring for the horse.



Common Symptoms

A thick woolly coat, even in the summer
Urinating and drinking a lot
Losing weight

Common Symptoms

A warm hoof when you touch it
Not wanting to walk
Leaning backwards to take weight off its front hooves.

Laminitis

Laminitis is an *illness that makes a horse's hoof very painful*. The tissues inside a hoof are called '*laminae*', and will become swollen and make the hoof feel warm. *The hoof has a bone inside it*, and, if laminitis is not treated early, then *the bone will start to turn around inside the hoof and will damage the hoof forever*.

Horses that are *too fat* are more likely to get laminitis, *so it's really important to keep a horse at the right weight*. Horses that do *too much work* are more likely to get laminitis, because pressure is put on the hoof.

