



Equine Colic Fact Sheet

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- Colic is not a disease, but it is a SYMPTOM of a disease. Colic is defined as any abdominal pain and can come from any abdominal organ, not just the GI tract.

Normal Adult Horse Physical Examination:

Temperature: 99-101.5 F
Heart rate: 24-48 beats/minute
Respiratory Rate: 10-24 breaths/minute
Good gastrointestinal sounds on both sides of the abdomen
Normal manure output – 6-10 piles/24 hours
Mucous membranes pink and moist, Capillary Refill Time <2 seconds

Possible Signs of Colic:

Mild: decreased or no appetite, reduced fecal output, depressed, lip curling
Moderate to severe: flank watching, pawing, rolling, bloated, getting up and down, stretching out, laying down more than usual

Call your veterinarian:

Sooner is ALWAYS better than later – Call when you notice a problem!
Signs are severe or unrelenting
Persistent pain despite Banamine/sedatives
High heart rate/respiratory rate/abnormal gums
Chronic, mild signs of colic that do not go away

Preventing Colic:

Good Management: high quality hay – very important!
Regular exercise
Regular deworming and dental care
Limit grain-based feeds, divide the daily concentrate ration
Establish a set routine
Keep good records
Minimize stress
Monitor closely when transporting
Observe pre and post foaling mares
Monitor horses closely with history of colic
Remember that intestinal accidents can happen under even the best management!

Please remember to call your veterinarian if you have any concerns. We are available at the University of Florida 24 hours a day at 352-392-2229.