COLIC IN HORSES

CAUSES, SIGNS, TREATMENT & PREVENTION

Brought to you by **HYGAIN**

CALL the VET

Colic is a combination of signs that alert us to **abdominal pain** in the horse. Many of the conditions that cause colic can become **life threatening** in a relatively short period of time.

SIGNS OF COLIC

Turning the head toward the flank

Elevated **pulse rate**

Pawing

Lack of **appetite**

Absence of or reduced **digestive sounds**

Kicking or biting at the abdomen

Rapid **respiration**

Sweating

Rolling

Stretching out as if to urinate
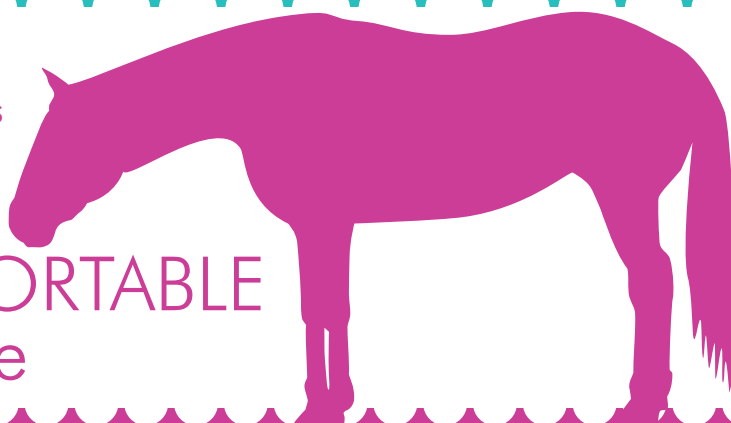
Repeatedly **lying down** and getting up (or attempting to do so)

Depression

Keep your horse as **CALM & COMFORTABLE** as possible

‣ Let him lie down when he appears to be resting and is not trying to roll.

‣ Walk your horse very slowly when he tries to roll or behaves violently.

VETERINARY
DIAGNOSIS & **TREATMENT**

1. Obtaining some **history** of the horse

Analgesics or sedatives to **relieve pain** and distress

Observation of behaviour, sweating, abdominal distension, rapid breathing, flared nostrils

2.

Laxatives to help re-establish **normal intestinal function**

Passage of a **stomach tube** to determine presence of excess gas, fluids, and ingesta

3. Monitoring **vital signs**, including temperature, pulse, respiration, colour of the mucous membranes and capillary refill

Abdominal tap in order to evaluate protein level and cell type in the peritoneal fluid

Continued observation to determine response to treatment

Rectal palpation for evidence of intestinal blockage, distension, or other abnormalities

4.

Possible **surgery referral**

COLIC **PREVENTION**
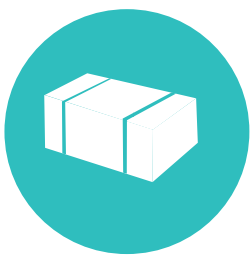
Feed a minimum of **1%** of your horse's body weight as **roughage**

Divide daily concentrate rations into two or more **smaller feeds** to avoid overloading the digestive tract

Set up a regular **parasite control program** with the help of your vet

Allow the horse to **self-exercise** and **graze** as if he would in the wild

Provide fresh, **clean water** at all times.

Make dietary and other management **changes** gradually