

You know something is not right with your horse. It may be subtle, in that they just don't look right, or something obvious like a bloody gash or a bad colic. In any case, there are things you can do both before and during the event to help create a more positive outcome.

Before the event...questions to ponder.

Should I insure my horse for major medical coverage?

Depending on the value of your horse, it makes a decision for emergency treatment or hospital referral much easier if you aren't bearing the brunt of the cost. If insurance isn't an option, consider setting some money aside in case of emergency.

Would I be willing to spend \$5,000-\$10,000 for surgery at a referral center if it was the only way to save my horse's life?

Often, time is of the essence and surgery is the only option to save your horse's life. Early intervention may make the difference in your horse's survival.

Do I have access to a trailer in case of emergency?

If there is any possibility that you would take your horse for life-saving surgery, make sure that you have access to a trailer **and that your horse is accustomed to loading on it.**



Do I know my horse's normal temperature, pulse and respiration?

While there are normal ranges for horses in general, all are individuals and have their own variations. It is best to take these values periodically at times when your horse is quiet. If you are unsure how to obtain any of these values be sure to ask your veterinarian.

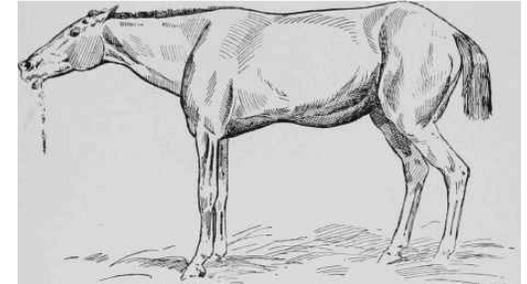
During an emergency...what to do.

1. If you have an obvious emergency, take a moment to assess the situation.



Lacerations: If there is blood, where is it coming from? **Lacerations involving the eyelids or near any joints, regardless of size, are emergencies.**

Colic: If your horse is colicky and you can safely approach them, try to get their temperature, pulse and respiratory rate before calling the veterinarian. **Call your veterinarian prior to administering any drugs**, so they can more accurately assess the situation.



Choke: If your horse is choking, don't panic. It looks awful, but it isn't immediately life threatening. The term "choke" in horses indicates food stuck in the esophagus rather than in the trachea so your horse will not suffocate. Please remove all food and water from the horse prior to calling your vet. **Do not "help" the horse by shoving a hose down their mouth and turning it on;** the water can just as easily go into the lungs and cause the horse to end up with pneumonia.

2. If you aren't sure that something is an emergency, gather all of the information you can - temperature, pulse, respiration, attitude etc.- and call your veterinarian. He or she may be able to give you reassurance or recognize a disaster in the making and take pre-emptive action.

Emergency phone call etiquette

-After you have left a clear message, please leave your phone line open to receive the return call.

-If cell service in your area is spotty, position your phone where you know it has service and you can hear it, or call on a land line.

-If you haven't received a return call within 15 minutes consider calling again as your veterinarian's cellular service may be patchy.