

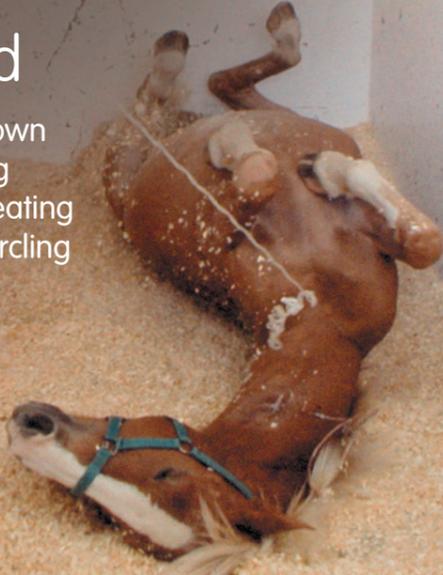


## Are you ready to **REACT** to colic?

If you notice any change in your horse's behaviour, or your horse is showing signs of distress, **REACT**. Even the most subtle changes could indicate there's a problem. Look out for warning signs like those illustrated below. If you are concerned for your horse, contact your vet for advice.

### **R**estless or agitated

- Attempts to lie down
- Repeatedly rolling
- Unexplained sweating
- Box-walking or circling



### **E**ating less or droppings reduced

- Eating less or nothing
- Passing less or no droppings
- Changes in consistency of droppings



## REACT

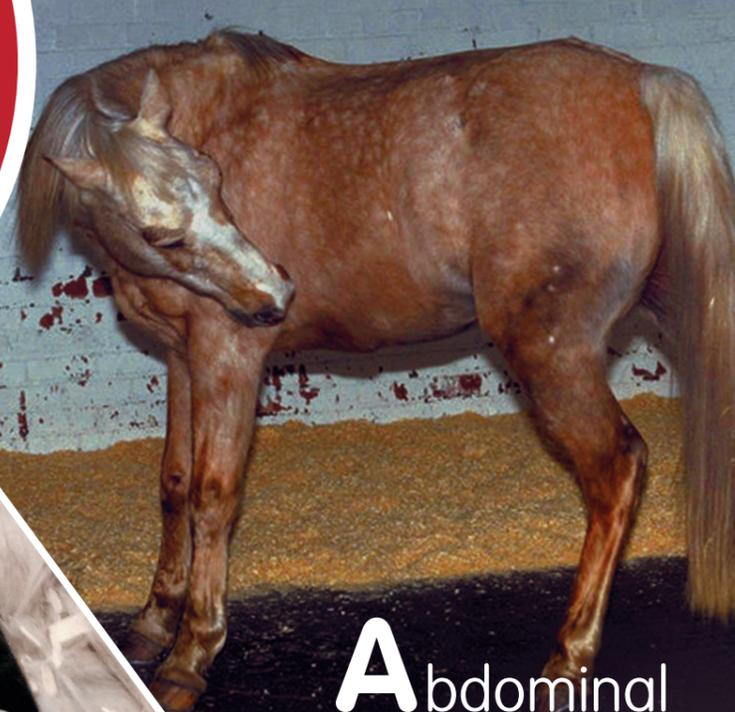
### **T**ired or lethargic

- Lying down more
- Lowered head position
- Dull and depressed



### **A**bdominal pain

- Flank watching
- Pawing
- Kicking at belly



### **C**linical changes

- Increased heart rate
- Reduced or absent gut sounds
- Changes in colour of gums
- Rapid breathing rate
- Skin abrasions over the eyes



## Make sure you're ready to **REACT**

Recognising colic early and acting quickly gives your horse the best chance of recovery.

# How you can help your horse

## Making decisions in an emergency

Understanding what's normal for your horse can help you decide the best course of action to take. If in doubt, don't wait – call for veterinary help right away. Acting quickly is

vital when a horse has colic, particularly if it's severe. However, planning ahead and knowing what's normal for your horse will save time, prevent stress and safeguard your horse's welfare.

## Waiting for the vet

Waiting for the vet can be difficult. Following these tips could help your horse during this stressful time.

- Provide your vet with clear directions and a contact number – if it's likely to be difficult for them to find your horse, ask someone to wait by a roadside landmark to help direct them.
- Gentle walking can be helpful – but don't force your horse to walk if they resist.
- If your horse is in severe pain, put them in a safe area, such as a well-bedded stable, or in an arena – but keep them in control with a lunge line.
- Remove any feed, hay-nets and water buckets from the stable.
- Allowing your horse to lie down or roll does not make colic worse, or cause a twisted gut.
- If your horse is insured, check it's covered for colic.
- Have transport ready, in case your vet refers your horse for further treatment.
- Remember – a horse with colic can become dangerous to handle. Your safety is paramount!



## Know what's normal

Knowing the normal temperature, pulse and respiration rates for your horse(s) means you will recognise if values are abnormal.



Typical heart  
(pulse) rate

**28-44**

beats per minute



Typical  
temperature

**37.5-38.5°C**

That's 99.5-101.3°F



Typical respiratory  
(breathing) rate

**8-16**

breaths per minute

To watch detailed videos demonstrating how to do these measurements, visit [www.bhs.org.uk/video-library](http://www.bhs.org.uk/video-library)

### My horse's heart rate

Horse's name

Normal rate

|       |       |
|-------|-------|
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

### My horse's temperature

Horse's name

Normal rate

|       |       |
|-------|-------|
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

### My horse's respiratory rate

Horse's name

Normal rate

|       |       |
|-------|-------|
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

### Owner

Name:

\_\_\_\_\_

Tel no:

\_\_\_\_\_

### Vet

Name:

\_\_\_\_\_

Tel no:

\_\_\_\_\_

### Emergency transport

Name:

\_\_\_\_\_

Tel no:

\_\_\_\_\_

If your horse shows signs of discomfort or illness, don't wait to call the vet, or waste time measuring parameters. However, if you've recorded what's normal for your animal in advance, it could help your vet once they've assessed your horse.

# REACT NOW to beat colic

The  
British  
Horse  
Society

What you need to know  
to help your horse



The University of  
**Nottingham**

UNITED KINGDOM • CHINA • MALAYSIA



# We're here to help

For more information:

**Visit:** [bhs.org.uk/colic](https://bhs.org.uk/colic)

**Call:** 02476 840517

**Email:** [welfare@bhs.org.uk](mailto:welfare@bhs.org.uk)

**Social:** [facebook.com/  
TheBritishHorseSociety](https://facebook.com/TheBritishHorseSociety)