



# CEDAR RUN VETERINARY SERVICES

CARING FOR HORSES DOGS AND CATS

## 10 Tips for Preventing Colic

The number one killer of horses is colic. Colic is not a disease, but rather 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. Only by quickly and seeking qualified veterinary help, can the chance for recovery be maximized.

Management plays a key role in prevention. Although not every case is avoidable, the following guidelines from the American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP) can maximize the horse's health and reduce the risk of colic:

1. Establish a daily routine – include feeding and exercise schedules – and stick to it.
2. Feed a high quality diet comprised primarily of roughage.
3. Avoid feeding excessive grain and energy-dense supplements.
4. Divide daily concentrate rations into two or more smaller feedings. Hay is best fed free-choice.
5. Set up a regular parasite control program with the help of your equine practitioner.
6. Provide exercise and/or turnout on a daily basis. Changes to a exercise regimen should be gradual.
7. Provide fresh, clean water at all times.
8. Avoid putting feed on the ground, especially in sandy soils.
9. Eliminate potentially toxic substances, such as blister beetles, noxious weeds, and other ingestible items.
10. Reduce stress. Horses experiencing changes in environment or workloads are at high risk of intestinal dysfunction. Pay special attention to horses when transporting them or changing their surroundings, such as at shows.

Virtually any horse is susceptible to colic. Age, sex, and breed differences in susceptibility seem to be relatively minor. The type of colic seen appears to relate to geographic or regional differences, probably due to environmental factors such as sandy soil or climatic stress.

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