

April 2022 Newsletter

Colic and Community Nursing

Unfortunately as an equine owner you are highly likely to come across colic. It can have very variable clinical signs and outcomes so it is important to be able to recognise it and ring a vet as soon as possible. The term colic refers to abdominal pain so is very non specific. It can be due to a variety of things including but not limited to spasmodic pain, gas, impaction, ulceration, parasites, displacement or twist in an intestine or even a rupture of an intestine or the stomach.

What signs might a horse or donkey show if they have colic?

- The horse may be quiet in themselves
- Rolling
- Pawing at the ground
- Flank watching
- Not eating
- Breathing quickly
- Increased heart rate
- Sweating
- Lying down
- Away from the herd
- Not passing faeces or producing abnormal faeces



What should I do if I suspect my horse or donkey has colic?

It is important to call your vet as soon as possible to enable your horse to be thoroughly examined and treated. Some colics can become life threatening very quickly if left untreated.

What should I do whilst I am waiting for a vet?

- Keep yourself safe. If the horse is thrashing around, stay out of the stable, paddock or arena they are in, until the vet gets there.
- Take food away from your horse but don't take water away.
- If possible move the horse somewhere where it is safe to roll such as a an arena or small paddock. Mild colics can be gently walked but if the horse won't walk or is wanting to keep going down force them to walk.
- Don't stop your horse rolling, they are unlikely to cause themselves more harm as long as they are in a safe space.
- Keep your phone on you so the vet attending can contact you.
- If possible let someone else know what is going on and where you are in case you do get injured.
- If you think you might wasn't your horse to have colic surgery if needed it's worth thinking about getting transport organised in case it is needed.

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How can I reduce the risk of my horse or donkey getting colic?

- Ensure they have access to clean water at all times.
- Have regular dental checks– ideally at least yearly to reduce the risk of impaction colics.
- Avoid sudden changes in diet and routine
- Perform regular worm egg counts every 2-3 months with once a year worming/testing for tape worm
- Ensure your horse receives regular exercise and turn out
- Keep a close eye on your horse to identify any mild signs of colic and call a vet as soon as possible, a mild colic can worsen if a horse then doesn't drink.
- If travelling to a show, take your own water.

For more information on how to recognise a horse or donkey with colic please see our website for further information and our youtube channel.

Community Nursing

Some of you may have been lucky enough to already have engaged with our community nursing. Our fantastic nurses will be now be offering the following services:

- Clicker Training
- Sedate for clipping
- Sedate for farrier
- Blood sampling including ACTH for cushings
- Asthma Clinics
- Weight management
- Bandage changes
- Foot radiographs
- Sedate and clean sheath
- Repeat medications

They will be supported appropriately by a vet as needed.

We currently have 2 qualified nurses at Summerleaze Vets (and one in training) who are experienced horse owners.

Amy Batten is one of our registered veterinary nurses. Amy qualified from Hartpury College in 2015 with an FdSc in Equine Veterinary nursing science, as part of her course, she completed a 14 month placement at Cambridge Equine Hospital. She then worked at Western Counties for 18 months helping on both the first opinion and referral equine hospital. Amy joined the Summerleaze nursing team in January 2017.

Emelie Real is our second registered veterinary nurse. Emelie started with us at Summerleaze in September 2020 but had been part of Coombefield for the past 13 years. Emelie has a certificate in teaching in the lifelong learning sector so is able to help us train and bring on other members of staff. Emelie is phenomenally helpful for our vets both in the clinic and on the road and is an important part of ensuring everything runs smoothly.

Bryony Marshallsay joined us in January 2020. Bryony is currently undertaking her Equine Nursing Diploma in conjunction with us and Liphook. Bryony helps as part of our nursing team assisting the vets and with all the preparation required to keep the clinical area of the practice at the correct standard.



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