

COLIC

Colic is a term used to describe a symptom of abdominal (tummy) pain which is usually caused by problems in the gastrointestinal tract, but can also be mimicked by conditions such as laminitis.

There are numerous different types of gastrointestinal colic ranging from the mild, for example caused by a change in diet or stress, to the severe in nature, for example caused by a twist in the gut.



Early intervention and treatment of the more serious colics is one of the most important factors in giving horses the best chance of survival following surgery.

What are the signs of colic? Let's use the BHS'S 'REACT' ACRONYM to identify the signs:

Restless or agitated

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

Eating less or droppings reduced

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

Abdominal pain

- Flank watching
- Pawing
- Kicking at belly

Clinical changes

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

Tired or lethargic

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

If your horse displays mild symptoms of colic and safe to do so walk the animal until the vet arrives- this can help relieve spasm and prevent further injury.

If your horse is displaying moderate/severe symptoms they will require urgent veterinary attention.

Prevention

Can be caused by change in regime therefore be consistent with your horse's routine.

An appropriate worming regime as internal parasites can be a cause of colic.

A high fibre-based diet can optimise gut health and help prevent colic