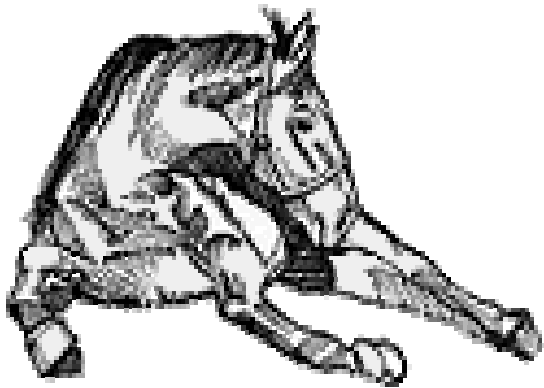


## ***Action Plan***

1. Call your “helper” for help.
2. Walk horse slowly for up to 45 minutes
3. Have “helper” pick up manure from stall or pen (so you can see new manure)
4. Prepare transportation
5. After you walk the horse, put back in stall or pen. If colic signs persist call your veterinarian and briefly give the information you have accumulated.
6. Don’t feed your horse, but allow (and even encourage) drinking water.
7. Don’t give any medication without your veterinarian’s knowledge.
8. Monitor manure output and consistency.



## ***Post-Colic Plans***

- Follow Feed and exercise instructions of your veterinarian carefully because reoccurrence of colic can occur within several hours.
- Watch for signs of complications like laminitis – Warm feet, slowed, stiff gait or reluctance to move forward
- Go over with your veterinarian your following programs:
  - *Feed/Hay*
  - *Turnout*
  - *Dental*
  - *Deworming*

Make sure they are not part of the cause.

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***Name of Your Veterinarian***

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***Phone Number***

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***The Equine Health Program at North Carolina State University’s College of Veterinary Medicine brings together horse owners, veterinarians, and college faculty on the issues, research, and advancements concerning horse health in North Carolina and beyond.***

# **Colic**

## **in the Horse:**

***What is involved with your horse at your place?***

by the:

**The Colic And Digestive Disease Program**

within the



**Equine Health Program**

**NC STATE UNIVERSITY** COLLEGE OF VETERINARY MEDICINE

<http://www.cvm.ncsu.edu/docs/ehp.html>



### ***Pre-Colic Decisions***

***(Discuss with your family and your veterinarian before colic occurs)***

- Know your own horse's temperature, heart and breathing rates. (Practice using your thermometer and stethoscope.)
- Do you have a good professional relationship and colic plan with your veterinarian?
- Do you have a "helper" you can all upon to help in this crisis?
- Will you want colic surgery for your horse if needed?

***Your horse can be transported to a facility for medical treatment like intensive IV fluids without a decision for surgery. Trailer rides and IV fluids have saved many colicky horses without surgery.***

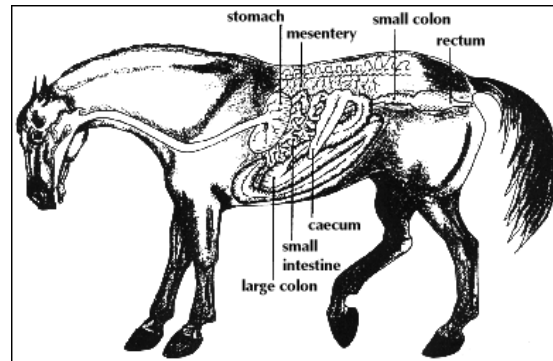
- Do you have insurance or a rainy day fund to pay the bill?
- If your horse is insured, do you know its requirements?
- Do you have transportation organized to a hospital – day or night?
- Is your horse trained to load easily?

***Colicky horses usually ride very well in a trailer. The vibration can be soothing and even therapeutic!***

### ***Colic***

Colic is a painful expression of many causes of abdominal pain in the horse. Colic is usually related to the G.I. Tract, but can be early signs of pneumonia, laminitis, tying up, ovarian, or uterine problems, to mention a few other problems.

Unfortunately G.I. related colic signs can be related to a host of mild problems, like gas or mild impaction to severe life threatening twists, gut displacements, and blockage.



### ***Predictions about Colic***

It is very difficult for everyone involved in the initial sighting and examination of the colicky horse to predict the specific problem and outcome. However, as each hour of unrelenting pain goes by, the chances of this colic being a difficult medical problem increase.

Colic is still a major natural killer of the horse.

### ***Colic Signs***

- "Laying around" – notice horse laying down at odd time. Up and then down again. Didn't eat or finish normal meal.
- Less manure or different consistency – dry, hard, smaller, mucous covered (looks like worms) or cow pie diarrhea.
- Rolling, kicking at belly, rubbing against stall walls.
- Profuse sweating, throwing themselves down.

### ***Your Assessment List***

- How long has the colic been going on? (or when did you see your horse normal last?)

***If the answer could be several hours or if your horse is down, breathing hard, or actively sweating (or has dried sweat areas), call your veterinarian immediately!***

- Temperature – use a rectal thermometer; Normal 97-100°F
- Heart rate – normal is 28-44 bpm (beats per minute)

***Get inexpensive stethoscope; press into chest at level of point of the elbow and count each lub-dub for 15 seconds and multiply that by 4 to get HR/minute***

- Gums – Lift up your horse's upper lip and observe for dryness and redness, which would indicate dehydration or shock.

