

Large Intestinal Impaction

General Information

An impaction is an immovable collection of compressed food mater in the intestine. Impactions often form at the point where the large colon narrows to become the small colon. The onset of large and small colon impactions can be subtle and may be occurring even if your horse is still eating and acting normally. In the first 12 hours of impaction your horse may pass manure less often than normal and the fecal balls may be smaller and slightly more firm than usual. Signs of a large intestinal impaction include refusal to eat, lying down and looking at its side, and not passing manure.

Causes of Impaction

- *Recent change in feed or hay.* Always keep an ample supply of feed on hand so that you can mix the old batch of feed/hay with the new batch. Do not change feeds abruptly.
- *Problems with water intake.* Your horse's drinking water may be too hot or too cold, and your horse may not be drinking enough water. There may be a problem with the water source, such as a broken dispenser, frozen water, or dead animal or manure in the water.
- *Weather changes.* Changes in weather may affect water intake, thus affecting hydration.
- *Eating sand.*
- *Intestinal parasites.*
- *Dental problems.*

Important Points in Treatment

___ Encourage your horse to drink water.

___ Offer no feed until your horse begins passing manure. Then feed:

We recommend the following medication:

Give _____ of _____ SC/IV/IM/PO _____ time(s) per day for _____ day(s).

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We are treating your horse routinely with medication and nasogastric tubing.

More involved treatment and intravenous fluids will be necessary.

Check your horse for colic signs every _____ hours. If possible, check the heart rate (normal, 30-50 beats/minute) and listen for intestinal sounds.

Hand walk your horse for _____ minutes every _____ hours.

Provide fresh water for your horse at all times. Do not offer any hay or other feed until your horse passes manure.

Gaze your horse for _____ minutes every _____ hours.

Feed bran mash (1-lb coffee can of bran, handful of grain, 2 tablespoons of Lite salt mixed to a paste consistency with warm water) _____ times per day.

In 12 hours, feed half of the regular amount of feed and lightly exercise your horse. After 24 hours of normal bowel function and passage of manure, feed and exercise your horse as usual.

After this episode of colic resolves, we would like to discuss with you:

Feeding program

Prevention of sand eating

Deworming program

Watering

Gastrointestinal evaluation

Dentistry

Call Our Office If:

- You have any questions concerning large intestinal impactions.
- Your horse demonstrates more colic pain, such as rolling and sweating (lying down quietly is okay).
- Your horse's heart rate rises to over 60 beats per minute.
- Your horse's condition does not improve within _____ hours. We will need to reexamine your horse.

We should recheck your horse in/on _____