

Does Your Horse Have a First Aid Kit?

By Kate Diederich, VMD

There are many different types of equine emergencies. The basic categories include:

- Colic
- Laceration
- Eye Injury
- Lameness
- Choke

It is always nice to be prepared and a nicely prepped First Aid kit can definitely come in handy. An informative emergency guide can be downloaded here: <http://glequine.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/first-aid-LR.pdf>

Items all horse owners should have easily accessible:

- Thermometer (digital is preferred) – One of the most important items to have. A thermometer will assist with narrowing down what maybe going on with a sick horse.
- Stethoscope – you do not need an expensive one, something basic is fine to take the horse's heart rate. Note: to take the horse's heart rate, push the bell of the stethoscope up under the horse's elbow on the left chest)
- Flashlight (also consider a headlamp to keep hands free) – After all, emergencies just don't happen in the daytime.
- Phone Numbers
 - Vet after hours number. (Note, Great Lakes Equine has doctors on call 24/7, 365 days a year, phone number is 920-779-4444.)
 - Neighbor's numbers (you might need assistance that is close by)
 - Horse friend with a trailer if you do not own a trailer. Best to have a discussion with your friend in advance instead of them needing to field a confusing phone call at 1 am to help you trailer your horse to a colic surgery or wherever else it needs to go. Please keep in mind there are people who trailer professionally so those numbers are good to have on hand as well.
- Documentation of your horse(s) normal TPR (temperature, pulse, respiration). Keep in mind these numbers might vary with cold/hot weather and stress. The following is a range of normals:
 - Temperature 99 – 101.5 degrees Fahrenheit
 - Pulse 28 – 44 beats/minute
 - Respiration 8 – 16 breaths/minute
- Supplies for Cleaning
 - Bucket
 - Towel(s)
 - Antiseptic scrub (Betadine or Chlorhexidine)
 - Hoof pick
 - Eye wash (not human contact solution)
 - Gloves
- Supplies for Bandaging
 - Nonstick Telfa pad(s)

- Roll gauze
- Sheet Cotton and/or clean quilts
- Polo wraps
- Vet wrap
- Elasticon
- Diaper(s) for hoof wrap (size 3 works for most horses)
- Duct tape for hoof wrap
- Scissors
- Veterinary Prescription Items
 - Triple antibiotic eye ointment (note this is not the same as over the counter triple antibiotic ointment, it is specifically for eyes.)
 - Banamine paste (an anti-inflammatory is very helpful for many emergencies especially colic)
 - Dose is labeled by pounds
 - Takes about 1 hour to work
- Optional Veterinary Prescription Items
 - Bute (another anti-inflammatory) good for pain associated with leg injuries.
 - Antibiotic wound ointment
 - A word of caution, many wounds will heal better with no ointments and many ointments may in fact slow down healing. Talk to your vet before applying any ointment to larger wounds.
 - Wire cutters
- On the Road Items
 - Extra food (hay/ grain) and water
 - Extra halter and lead rope
 - Batteries for flashlight
 - Instant ice pack(s)
 - Emergency road side assistance number if your truck/trailer breaks down.

Please note that first aid kits can be purchased from Great Lakes Equine.]



Doctor Kate's final words of advice for equine emergencies:

1. Painful horses can be dangerous and not themselves. Stay safe!
2. Call your vet.
3. Stay calm. There is usually more time than it feels like in the heat of the moment. Keep a clear mind.