



Colic – My horse has a sore tummy.

What is colic?

The term “colic” only means “pain in the abdomen” and is a clinical sign of an underlying disease. There are multiple diseases that can affect the horse’s gastrointestinal tract (e.g the stomach, intestines and caecum), these diseases can range from mild to life threatening. It can be very difficult to distinguish a mild case of colic from a potentially life threatening case of colic and this is where your veterinarian comes in. Any cases of colic or abdominal pain in a horse should be taken seriously and not ignored.

What to look for?

- Horse is lying down a lot.
- Horse is “flank staring” or bending head around to look at its flanks / bottom.
- Sweating -up.
- Pawing at the ground
- Continuous rolling on the ground
- Kicking at abdomen
- Inability to urinate or defecated
- Stretching for a long time (standing stretched out or awkwardly)
- Increase in heart rate and temperature

The normal heart rate for a horse is between 36 – 40 beats per minute.

The normal temperature of a horse is between 37.5 – 38.5°C

What to do?

- Remain calm and call your local veterinarian
- Keep the horse standing, some people advocate generally walking your horse
- Monitor for any faeces and keep any manure to allow the veterinarian to examine.