

Colic Season is Upon Us

Colic refers to any condition causing signs of abdominal pain in horses. We are approaching the dry season when pasture quality is poor and feed supplementation is required. Colic episodes, particularly large intestinal impactions traditionally increase in frequency as pastures dry off and hay feeding increases. However there are some steps you can take to reduce the risk of colic attacks.

- Horses are creatures of habit - maintain regular feeding and exercise routines
- Don't wait until the last bag of feed is left before buying new feed and make any changes in feed gradually over several days to weeks
- Always ensure access to a plentiful supply of fresh water and an electrolyte source such as salt a block
- Feed good quality roughage avoiding stalky hay or feed that has been wet. If using poorer quality hay (such as Rhodes grass round bales), use fine cut hay and feed it in smaller regular amounts in hay bags rather than allowing free access
- Minimise sand ingestion feeding your horse in a sand free area or on a large rubber apron to reduce the amount of sand ingested
- Contact your veterinarian for regular dental examinations (ie every 6-12 months)
- Control worms through rotational grazing, manure removal, and a regular worming program with a reputable wormer product (eg Equest Gel Plus)

Thankfully approximately 90% of colics respond to medical treatment in the form of pain relief and re-hydration through drenching and intravenous fluid therapy. Whatever the cause of your horse's colic early treatment is probably the single most important thing that can mean the difference between life and death.