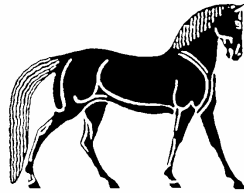


Equine Medicine and Surgery

Complete Primary Care
Dentistry Acupuncture
www.DrGwald.com



Henry Greenwald, DVM

Raising the Standard in
Horse Health
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First Aid for Horse Owners

Dress appropriately to protect yourself from the rain & cold and have a headlight.

Step 1 What's going on

Stay calm, take a minute (or longer) to assess the situation. Make a plan or just follow the steps.

Be careful, injured animals may not behave normally. You can't help your horse if you're injured.

- Airways and Breathing
- Bleeding - assess the amount of blood. A small volume of blood sprayed around can make a scene look much worse than it is. Whether it is an artery (spurting) or a vein that's cut, the treatment is to apply direct pressure. Plan on at least 10 minutes of pressure, ice (15-20 minutes) is also helpful, but flushing with water will wash away the clot. If you put on a pressure bandage don't remove it if it gets blood soaked. If you have any doubts about the bleeding being stopped, don't remove the bandage, just put another one on top.
 - Blood clotting
 - Washing the wound
 - Amount of blood loss
 - Rate of blood loss
- Vital Signs: Temperature, Pulse, Respiration, Hydration
- Mental status check (Shock or Nervous system problems) - Is your horse aware of what's going on? Are the eyes and ears alert? Are the ears and legs cold? Are the gums pale, blue tinged, or purple?
- Keep the horse quiet and calm, a dark stall with minimal stimulation is usually helpful.
- Does the horse have any allergies or reactions to medications?
- Is he up? Can he Walk?

Step 2 Assess the wound

- Types of wounds
 - Abrasion - scraping away of the skin
 - Laceration - a cut through the skin
 - Puncture - deep wound with a small opening
 - Bruise - skin intact, a diffuse wound; sometimes worse than open wound
 - Burns - skin wounds, lung damage from smoke or caustic chemical inhalation
- Contamination - Dirt and Infection, hidden foreign bodies, bone fragments
- Location of the wound - is lameness involved
 - Around a joint
 - Over a body cavity - lungs, abdomen
 - Over a muscle
 - On the lower legs
 - Head or neck - face, mouth, eyes, trachea, esophagus
 - Withers or bony protrusions
- Examine the WHOLE horse

Step 3 Treatment

- Can you handle it or should you call the veterinarian?
- Hydrotherapy (water hosing), ice, hot or cold compress
- Wound flushing (lavage), a teaspoon of salt per quart for a saline solution
- Disinfectant ointments
- Bandaging
- Anti-inflammatories and anti-microbials (antibiotic)

Step 4 **Treatments to AVOID if you are not sure what you are doing!**

- Hydrogen peroxide and alcohol - both irritate the tissues and delay healing
- Chlorhexidine (Nolvasan®) - kills cells
- Nitrofurazone (Furacin®) - kills cells, carcinogenic
- Drugs or medications - on a wound, by mouth, by injection
- Tourniquets
- Splints

Colic (Abdominal Pain)

- Signs - A brief list
 - Rolling, getting up and down, unable to find a comfortable position, unusual stretching or body position
 - Sweating, pawing, pacing
 - Biting at flanks, bloated flanks
 - Depression or a change in attitude, poor or no appetite
 - Increased pulse and/or breathing rate
 - Abnormal manure, diarrhea, hard dry or mucus-like covered feces
- Assessment
 - TPR - Temperature 99.5 - 101.5° F / Pulse ~ 40 / Respiration ~ 12
 - Hydration - wet slimy gums are normal
 - Check gum color and capillary refill time (CRT)
 - Listen for gut sounds
- Treatment
 - Call the veterinarian now, treat early
 - Keep the horse comfortable, blanket if it's cold
 - Encourage the horse to drink water
 - Minimize additional stress to the horse
 - It is OK to let the horse move around and get up and lie down if he's not thrashing around
 - Rest is important; do not tire your horse with too much walking or exercise
 - **Do not** constantly walk the horse, you can trot the horse for a few minutes once or twice an hour or gently walk them to distract them from their pain
 - **Do not** administer any medication without talking to a veterinarian
 - **Do not** force water or oil down the horse's throat

Other resources:

- US Rider Equestrian Motor Plan - www.usrider.org (800) 844-1409
- Transportation Safety - Hawkins' guide on Equine Emergencies and Horse Trailering on the Road from Blue Green Publishing Co., POB 1255 Southern Pines, NC 28388. There is also a video tape on equine trailer rescue from the Horse Park of New Jersey, POB 548, Allentown NJ 08501.
- Hands on Horse Care From Horse and Rider *The Complete Book of Equine First Aid* by Karen Hayes, DVM Published by Horse and Rider Magazine ISBN 0-86573-861-0
- UC Davis Book of Horses *A Complete Medical Reference Guide for Horses and Foals* by Faculty and Staff of University of California, Davis School of Veterinary Medicine \$30
- Poison Hotline - ASPCA (888) 426-4435 \$60 / North Shore Animal League (888) 232-8870 \$35

What's In Your First Aid Kit?

Use the same kit for horses & humans - (you might want a second thermometer).

Your kit will reflect your knowledge and skills. Keep each item clean in a separate zip plastic bag

Here are some suggestions:

- Knife w/ serrated blade - best worn on your belt for quick access
- Toolbox for trailer or barn - bright color and marked on the top & sides
- Small version - ziplock bags in a nylon waterproof pouch that you can carry on your belt or horse (best to have a flap that sheds water)
- BABY WIPES / paper towels / small cloth towels
- Thermometer - digital won't break easily
- Stethoscope - listen to breathing, heart and gut sounds (buy one at a drug store or Fry's)
- Flashlight - headlight is especially handy
- Triple antibiotic ointment (e.g. Neosporin®) / Ophthalmic ointment
- Tamed Iodine (povidone iodine - e.g. Betadine®) comes as a solution for flushing or a scrub w/soap for cleaning very dirty wounds / Gauze pads
- Blunt tip utility scissors
- Nitrile / latex / PVC gloves
- Syringe (luer or catheter tip, spray bottle) - for flushing wound
- Mastitis tubes - especially good for punctures
- Saline solution, eye wash
- Wound Dressings
 - Non-stick pads (foam, Release®, Telfa®)
- Padding
 - Combine, Gamgee®, Sheet cotton, Practical Cotton, fleece, polo wraps, diapers
- Bandaging
 - gauze roll (4-6"), Conform®, Cling
- Tape
 - Self stick - CoFlex®, VetWrap®
 - Adhesive - Elasiant®, Elastikon®, Duct Tape, white Tape
 - Standing bandage, Spider bandage
- Miscellaneous
 - Towels, Paper towels, safety pins, hoof boot, epinephrine, fencing pliers, fly ointment, diapers, twitch, lubricant, tweezers, electrolytes, gun, Banamine Paste®, ichthamol ointment, crease nail pullers, shoe pull-offs, sugar, honey, super glue