

IS YOUR HORSE DEHYDRATED?



EQUINE VETERINARY
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FIVE BASIC INDICATORS

MUCOUS MEMBRANE (gums)

- Bright pink/red colour
- Dry to touch
- Capillary Refill Time (CRT) >2 seconds

HEART RATE

> 50 beats per minute (normal resting rate 28-40 beats per minute)

RESPIRATION RATE

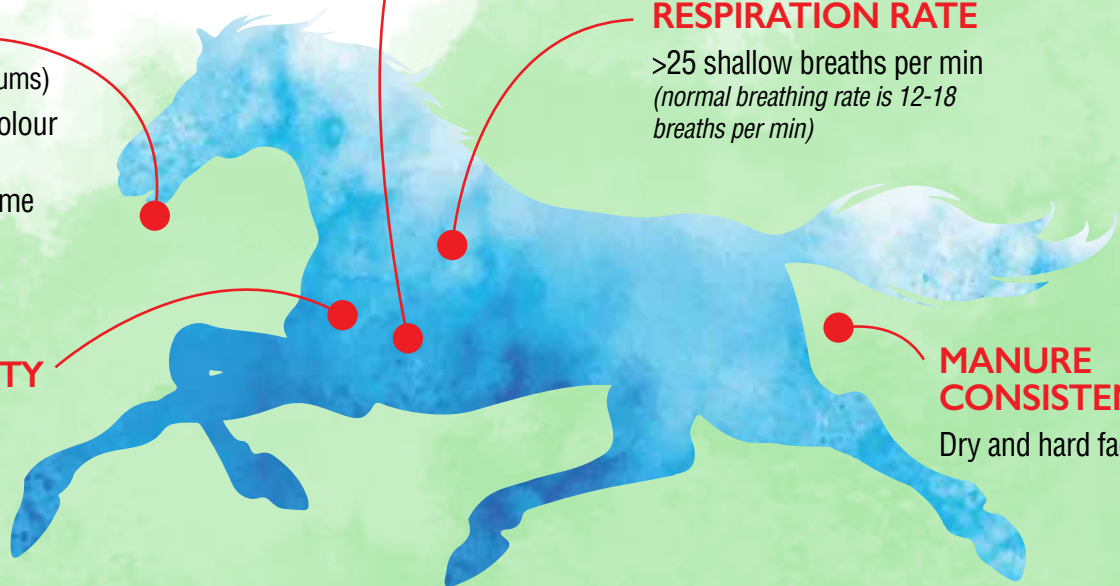
>25 shallow breaths per min
(normal breathing rate is 12-18 breaths per min)

SKIN ELASTICITY RECOIL TIME

> 2 seconds

MANURE CONSISTENCY

Dry and hard faecal balls



HOW TO...

ASSESS CRT

- Gently press on the gum of the upper jaw for 1-2 seconds causing a white "spot"
- As pressure is released, count the number of seconds it takes for the pink colour to return to the "spot"

Normal = 1-2 seconds

Mild Dehydration = 2-3 seconds

Severe Dehydration = 3-4 seconds

SKIN ELASTICITY TEST

- Pinch up a small fold of skin on the side of the lower third of the horse's neck
- Count the number of seconds it takes for the skin to return to a flat position

Normal = immediately

Mild Dehydration = 1-2 seconds

Severe Dehydration = skin stays pinched

TREATING DEHYDRATION

Horses need approx. 40-60 litres of water per day, sometimes more depending on ambient temperature and exercise level.

A working horse will sweat and lose electrolytes such as sodium (Na), potassium (K), and calcium (Ca).

ENSURE:

- Fresh clean water is available after each work session
- Plain water is offered in addition to any electrolyte/supplement solutions
- A suitable supplement ration is added to the daily feed based on climate, humidity and anticipated workload
- Electrolyte pastes are in the first aid kit for times of transport, work in hot weather or stress.

If you determine that your horse is mildly to severely dehydrated, seek veterinary attention immediately.



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