

Colic

Know what “normal” is for your pony (e.g. normal heart rate, temperature and breathing rate) so you can quickly identify if something is wrong. Signs can be very varied and can include:

- a pony being restless or agitated, repeatedly rolling or attempting to lie down, box walking or sweating;
- abdominal pain, pony watching its own flanks, pawing the ground or kicking its stomach;
- eating less or nothing;
- passing less or no droppings or a change in consistency in the droppings;
- lying down more, a lower head position, or appears dull and depressed;
- clinical change such as an increased heart rate, reduced or absent gut sounds, changes in gum colour, rapid breathing rate, skin abrasions over the eyes (this is not an exhaustive list).

If in doubt, don't wait, call the vet. Acting quickly is important, particularly in severe cases.

- Remove feed, haynets and water buckets from the stable.
- Gentle walking can help but if the pony doesn't want to walk, don't force them.
- Don't prevent them from lying down if they want to.
- If the pain is severe, put the pony in a safe environment, like a well-bedded stable or in an arena but keep them in control with a lunge line.
- Be aware that the pony may be unpredictable: Wear a hard hat and gloves if possible.
- If you have help, get transport ready to go in case the vet thinks further treatment off site is necessary.

Based on the BHS and The University of Nottingham REACT Now to Beat Colic Campaign. Further information on this can be found at: www.bhs.org.uk/colic

For more emergency first aid advice see download on the NPS husbandry page.