

Equine Colic
ALTERNATIVE VETERINARY MEDICINE CENTRE
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COLIC IN THE HORSE

What is it?

Colic is basically abdominal pain. The horse is very sensitive to abdominal pain and signs can be dramatic. In extreme cases, the horse will roll and thrash. In milder cases the horse will tend to want to go down. In very milder cases still, signs may simply be loss of appetite, tail swishing, looking round at belly or kicking up at belly. There is usually failure to pass dung.

Colic may be a result simply of impaction of the bowel, inflammation of the bowel or a collection of gas that cannot escape. A few cases, requiring prompt surgery (surgical colic), may be the result of a twisted bowel or of constriction by, say, an intra-abdominal growth (e.g. melanoma in grey horses). These cases are identified by the vet by draining off some abdominal fluid.

Non-surgical colic can arise as a result of feeding unsuitable foods, feeding of frosted grass, excess feeding especially on grain products, from 'wind-sucking' or as a result of stress.

Treatment

It is always wise to call a vet immediately colic signs are seen. If, however, the establishment is well accustomed to seeing and assessing colic cases, immediate vet call-out may not be necessary.

Anyway, doses of [homeopathic](#) *Nux vomica*, *Carbo veg.* and *Colocynth*, every five or ten minutes, and walking out, may bring the colic under control before the vet arrives. If, however, it is a case of 'surgical colic' (much less common), the symptoms and signs will not abate. (The homeopathic approach will not dangerously suppress the signs of a dangerous colic, masking the need for surgical intervention, as can some modern, strong pain-killing drugs.)

Colic - AVMC

If the horse feels like some food, a small helping of bran and cooked linseed mash with a little Epsom salts is no bad thing.

We would recommend dietary changes, to a healthy, [natural feeding regime](#), especially if colic is a recurrent problem, to help prevent further attacks. We also counsel a holistic approach to worming, vaccination and grazing management.

See also: <http://www.naturalfeeding.co.uk>

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