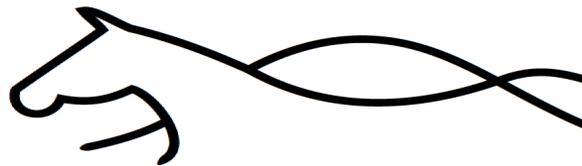


# Equine Emergencies:

Because Horses Need Bubble wrap

Kristin Abderhalden, DVM  
Nadine Salomon, VMD



**Allegheny Equi**

# First things First...Know Your Horse

- ▶ What is normal behavior for your horse?
  - ▶ Eating, manure and urination habits
- ▶ Routine check ups



- ▶ As horse owners, you must know how to recognize serious problems, respond promptly and take appropriate action.



# Plan Ahead

- ▶ Handle your horse
- ▶ Keep important information handy so you don't have to search for it
  - ▶ Veterinarian's phone number
  - ▶ Equine veterinary hospital information
  - ▶ Insurance information
- ▶ Have a Transportation Plan
  - ▶ Practice trailering
- ▶ Fund a Medical Emergency Account
- ▶ Know your horse's normal vital signs
- ▶ First- Aid Kit



# Recognize Signs of Distress

- ▶ Decreased appetite
- ▶ Lethargic attitude
- ▶ Lying down longer than normal
- ▶ Single animal off by itself
- ▶ Sudden Lameness
- ▶ Squinting, tearing or holding the eye closed
- ▶ Fever ( $T > 102F$ )
- ▶ Purple or bright red gum color
- ▶ Diarrhea

# First Assessment:

- ▶ Is it safe to approach the horse?
- ▶ If so:
  - ▶ Catch and calm the horse.
  - ▶ If possible, move the horse to a safe place.
  - ▶ Get someone to help you.



# Basic Exam:

- ▶ Take the time to gather information to relay to your veterinarian such as:
  - ▶ Temperature
  - ▶ Heart rate
  - ▶ Respiratory rate
  - ▶ Gut sounds
  - ▶ Mucous membrane color
  - ▶ Capillary refill time
  - ▶ Attitude and appetite



# Rectal Temperature

- ▶ Normal Temperature is between 99 - 101.5F
- ▶ Digital or mercury thermometer



# Heart Rate



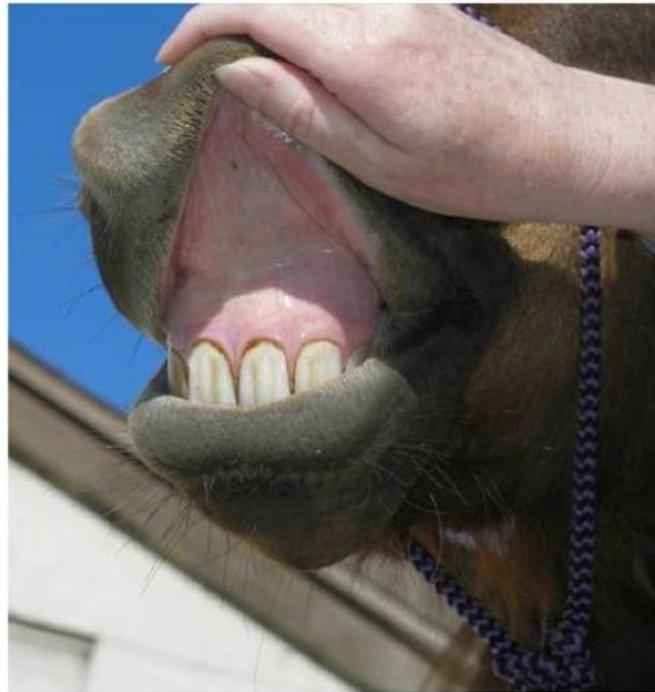
- ▶ Normal Resting Heart Rate = 28 to 44 Beats Per Minutes (BPM)

# Respiratory Rate

- ▶ Normal rate = 12 to 16 breaths per minutes



# Capillary Refill Time & Membrane Color



# Gut Sounds



# Attitude & Appetite

- ▶ A change in personality or attitude may indicate pain or disease.
- ▶ A loss of appetite is a good indication that your horse does not feel well.

# COLIC

- ▶ What is it?
  - ▶ Abdominal pain which can be caused by the pain to any organ in the abdomen. Most commonly this is an intestinal issue.
  - ▶ Can be life threatening if severe
- ▶ Signs:
  - ▶ Not eating, lethargic, lying down, looking at abdomen, rolling, kicking at belly, thrashing, stretching out

# COLIC



# COLIC: What to do

- ▶ Remove all food (hay, grain, treats, grass)
  - ▶ Can have access to water
- ▶ Take vitals if able and check for recent manure.
- ▶ Hand walk if able
- ▶ Call Your Veterinarian
  - ▶ Do not give any medications until discussed

# COLIC: Things to Tell Your Vet

- ▶ Recent changes in feed or routine.
- ▶ Medical information such as pregnancy or recent vaccines, deworming, etc.
- ▶ Temperature, Heart rate and gut sounds
- ▶ Quantity and consistency of manure passed in the last 24 hours
- ▶ Do not give your horse any medications until you have talked with your veterinarian.

# FEVER of unknown origin

- ▶ What is it?
  - ▶ Rectal temperature >101.5F for an adult horse
- ▶ Signs:
  - ▶ Lethargic, not eating
  - ▶ A fever is a sign of an internal inflammation or infection somewhere
  - ▶ If your horse isn't eating or feeling right, ALWAYS take a temperature.
  - ▶ “Your hand isn't accurate”

# FEVER: What to do

- ▶ Look over your horse for swellings, wounds, snotty nose, diarrhea or other reasons for the fever.
- ▶ Call your veterinarian to determine if you should give Banamine, have a veterinarian visit your horse or monitor.
- ▶ Cool your horse with a water or alcohol bath.

# FEVER: Things to Tell Your Vet

- ▶ Vaccinations
- ▶ Medications
- ▶ History of travel
- ▶ Other ill horses in the barn
- ▶ Recent procedures or medication changes

# Wounds & Bleeding

- ▶ Horses frequently get cuts and scrapes. It is important to know which wounds need veterinary attention.



# LACERATIONS

- ▶ What is it?
  - ▶ Any cut through the skin
- ▶ How do you judge severity?
  - ▶ Location of the cut (tendon, joint, artery, muscle?)
  - ▶ Is the cut bleeding and how severely?
  - ▶ How lame is the horse?
- ▶ What to do:
  - ▶ Evaluate cut and call vet.
  - ▶ If bleeding, apply pressure via a clean bandage if possible
  - ▶ Send photos to the vet to help judge urgency.
  - ▶ Do NOT apply blue coat!!

# LACERATIONS

- ▶ Wounds that need immediate veterinary attention include:



# LACERATIONS



# LACERATIONS



# BLEEDING

- ▶ Blood squirting or flowing in a steady stream from a wound needs to be controlled.
- ▶ To stop bleeding, hold a sterile pad or clean towel to the wound and apply steady, firm pressure.
- ▶ Apply a pressure bandage.

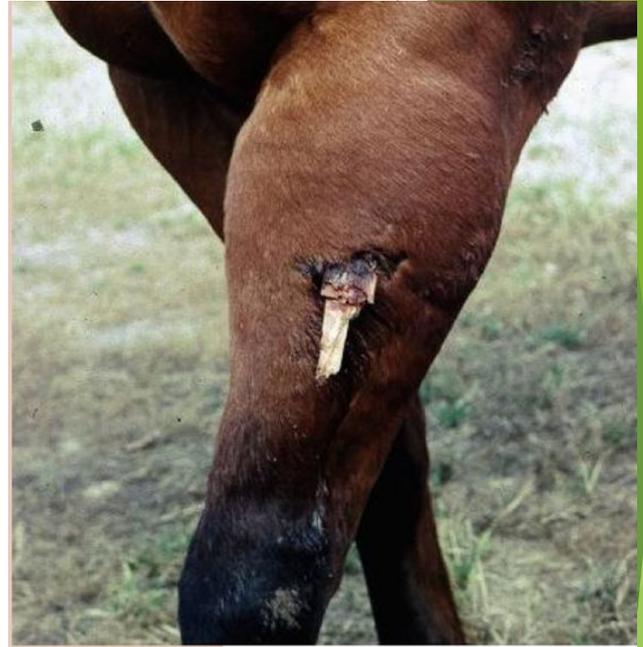


# PRESSURE BANDAGE



# FOREIGN BODY PENETRATIONS

- ▶ If possible, impaled objects should be left in place.
- ▶ Notify your veterinarian before attempting to remove a large foreign object.
- ▶ Removing them may cause blood loss or further damage.



# NAIL IN THE FOOT





D

D



# SUDDEN LAMENESS

- ▶ Hoof Abscess (most common)
- ▶ Fractures
- ▶ Laminitis
- ▶ Tendon Injuries



# SUDDEN LAMENESS

- ▶ What to do?
  - ▶ Closely evaluate your horse for swelling, wounds, heat or any other indications of the cause of the lameness.
  - ▶ Take the horse's temperature especially if there is a swelling.
  - ▶ Call your veterinarian with the signs you are seeing to determine the course of action.

# LAMINITIS

- ▶ What is it?
  - ▶ Extremely painful condition caused by inflammation of the lamina within the hoof.
- ▶ Signs:
  - ▶ Reluctant to move
  - ▶ Lying down
  - ▶ Leaning back
  - ▶ Heat in the hooves



# LAMINITIS: SIGNS



# FRACTURES

- ▶ Unable to bear ANY weight on the affected limb.
- ▶ Leg held in abnormal angle.
- ▶ Wound with bone protruding.



# EYE INJURIES

- ▶ What is it?
  - ▶ Any injury to the globe or surrounding eyelids.
- ▶ Signs:
  - ▶ Eyelid swelling, squinting, tearing, eyelid lacerations/bleeding, grayness of the cornea, anything abnormal



# EYE INJURIES: What to do

- ▶ If able, you can flush the eye with artificial tears or sterile saline.
- ▶ Take photos and call your veterinarian.
- ▶ Do not administer medications until you speak with your veterinarian.



# RESPIRATORY DISTRESS

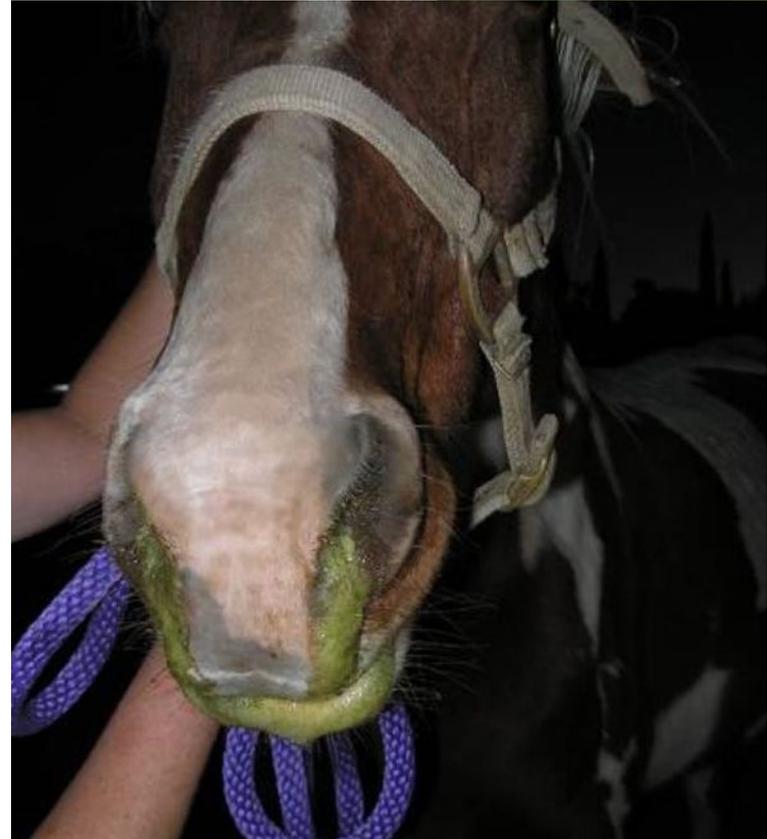
- ▶ What is it?
  - ▶ Difficulty breathing
- ▶ Signs:
  - ▶ Increased respiratory rate
  - ▶ Increased respiratory effort
  - ▶ Open- mouth breathing
  - ▶ Nostril flare
  - ▶ Reduced airflow out of the nostrils
  - ▶ Abducted elbows

# RESPIRATORY DISTRESS: What you can do

- ▶ Take temperature
- ▶ Check mucous membranes
- ▶ Call veterinarian
- ▶ If a fever is present, a cool bath could help
- ▶ Decrease stress and anxiety.

# CHOKE

- ▶ What is it?
  - ▶ Obstruction of the esophagus NOT the airway
- ▶ Signs
  - ▶ Coughing & Retching
  - ▶ Extending the neck
  - ▶ Large amounts of nasal discharge, containing food and saliva



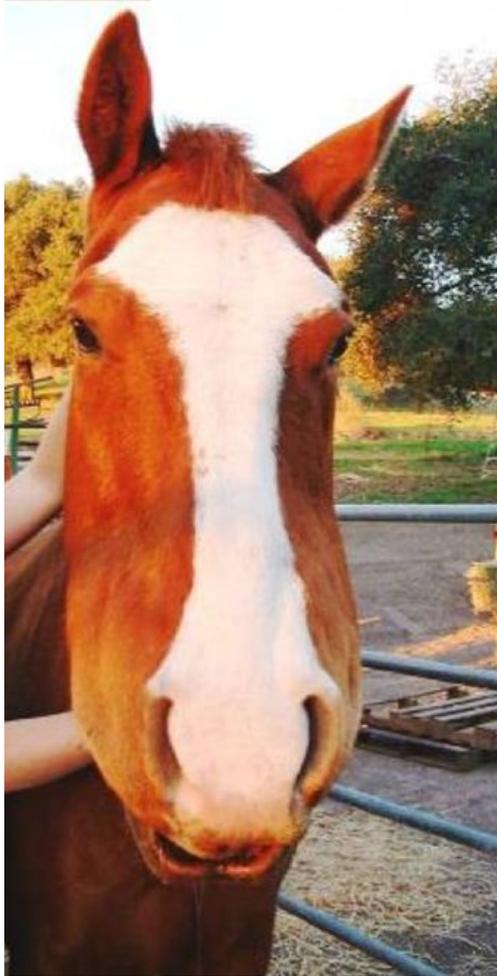
# CHOKER: What to do

- ▶ Remove all food.
- ▶ Allow the horse to move and stretch as he tries to relieve the choke.
- ▶ Do not put a hose in the horse's mouth.
- ▶ Call your vet immediately.

# ALLERGIC REACTIONS

- ▶ What is it?
  - ▶ Hypersensitivity of the body's immune system
- ▶ Signs
  - ▶ Skin - hives, swelling
  - ▶ Itchy, tearing eyes
  - ▶ Increased respiratory rate/effort
  - ▶ Anaphylaxis

# ALLERGIC REACTIONS



# ALLERGIC REACTIONS: What to do

- ▶ Assess the severity of the reaction
  - ▶ Is it affecting the nose, face or airway
  - ▶ Is the horse in respiratory distress?
- ▶ Bathe the horse if it may be a contact allergy.
- ▶ Call your vet

# FOALING

- ▶ Fortunately, foaling problems are rare, but when there is a problem, it is usually serious.
- ▶ Ideally the mare should be attended when she foals so problems can be identified quickly.



# RED BAG DELIVERY



# A NORMAL, HEALTHY FOAL

- ▶ Should stand within 1 hour;
  - ▶ Should nurse within 2 hours;
  - ▶ Mare will pass the afterbirth within 3 hours.
- 
- ▶ This is known as the 1, 2, 3 of foaling



# FOAL: DANGER SIGNALS

- ▶ Notify your veterinarian immediately if:
  - ▶ The foal seems depressed or lethargic
  - ▶ If the foal is not nursing
  - ▶ Increased Temp > 102F
  - ▶ Increased or labored breathing
  - ▶ Straining to defecate or urinate
  - ▶ Signs of colic
  - ▶ Yellow around the eyes or gums
  - ▶ Swollen or painful joints
  - ▶ Swollen or painful umbilicus
  - ▶ Diarrhea

# ABNORMAL URINATION

- ▶ Signs:
  - ▶ Straining to urinate.
  - ▶ Posturing to urinate and not producing urine.
  - ▶ Producing abnormally colored urine.



# SWELLING POST INJECTION

- ▶ What is it?
  - ▶ Swelling in the muscle after a vaccine or other intramuscular or intravenous injection
- ▶ Could be inflammation OR a serious infection.
- ▶ What to do:
  - ▶ Take temperature
  - ▶ Call your vet



# “He doesn’t seem like himself”

- ▶ You know your horse - If you think something is wrong, investigate.



# Westmoreland & Butler County Animal Response Team (CART)

- ▶ Group of volunteers trained to help animals in a emergency situation.
- ▶ Call 911 to ask for CARTS assistance in case of emergencies involving animals



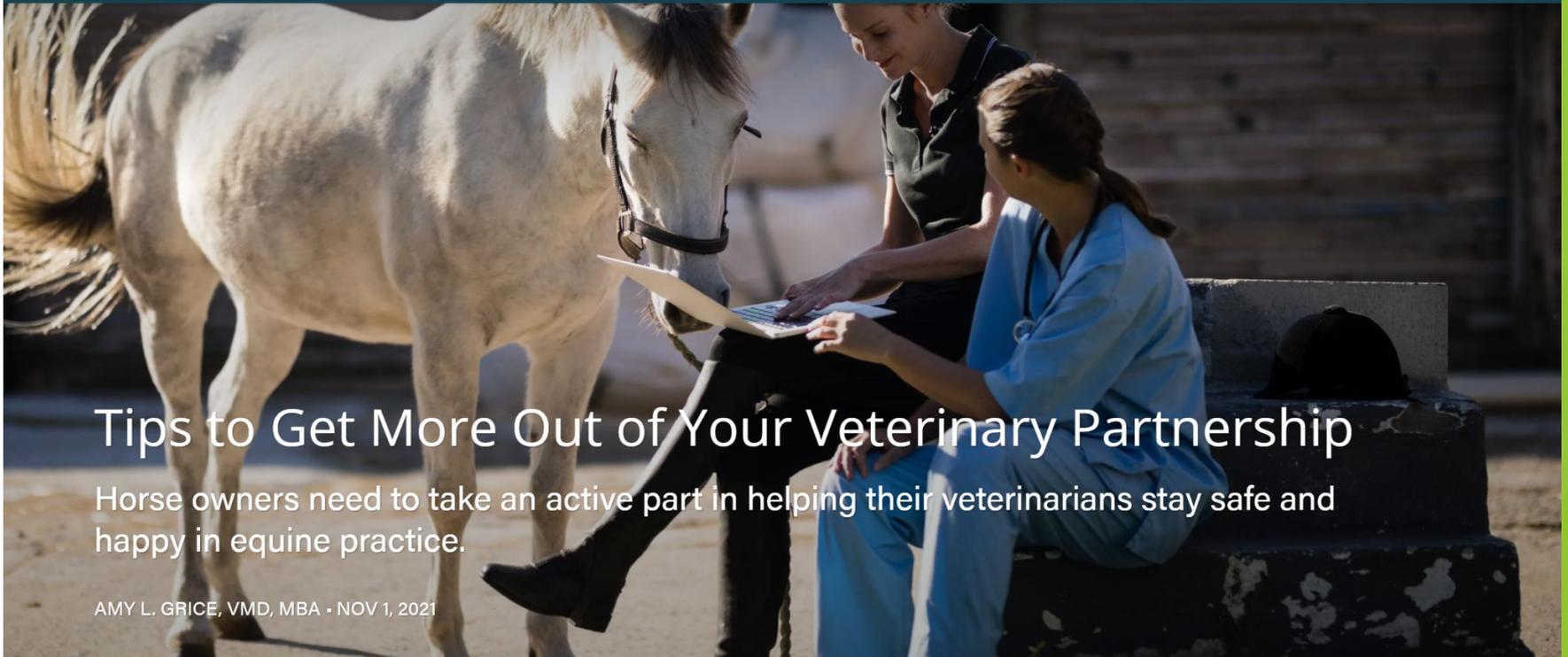
# First Aid Kit Supplies

- ▶ Gauze pads
- ▶ Roll cotton
- ▶ Adhesive wrap
- ▶ Leg wraps
- ▶ Scissors
- ▶ Duct Tape
- ▶ Stethoscope
- ▶ Thermometer
- ▶ Eye Wash/Saline
- ▶ Antiseptic Solution
- ▶ Latex Gloves
- ▶ Flashlight and spare batteries
- ▶ Knife

# Changing Face of Equine Vet Medicine

PRACTICAL  
HORSEMAN

TRAINING HEALTH COMPETITIONS PERSONALITIES LIFESTYLE PODCAST PRACTICAL HORSEMAN EXTRA



## Tips to Get More Out of Your Veterinary Partnership

Horse owners need to take an active part in helping their veterinarians stay safe and happy in equine practice.

AMY L. GRICE, VMD, MBA • NOV 1, 2021

# The FACTS:

- ▶ Only 1% of vet school grads enter equine practice
  - ▶ (Approximately 40 doctors per year across the US)
- ▶ Approximately 60 equine vets retire per year
- ▶ 50% of vets who enter equine practice end up leaving within 5 years
- ▶ Recent pandemic has increased retirement and exiting from the profession as individuals “re-center” to do what is best for themselves and their families.

# What does that mean for the Horse Owner?

- ▶ **Demand for equine veterinary services > Supply of vets**
  - ▶ Vet costs rise
  - ▶ Emergency services on the farm become limited
  - ▶ Transportation of horses becomes a necessity
  - ▶ The need for emergency referral centers to give the ambulatory veterinarians a break on call are on the rise.
  
- ▶ In order to treat more horses, the limited number of vets have to triage and if the patients can be brought to them, vets are able to help more horses in a day.

# Why leave equine medicine?

- ▶ Long hours/lifestyle
- ▶ Physically, emotionally and financially demanding
- ▶ Emergency duty while still working your routine appts
- ▶ Constant texts, calls and emails after hours and weekends

Many leave for small animal medicine:

- ▶ 3-4 day scheduled work week with with No Oncall
- ▶ Emergency referral services
- ▶ Significantly increased salary
- ▶ When they leave for the day they are done. Work doesn't follow them home.
- ▶ Inside vs fighting the elements outside

# What can you do?

- ▶ **Develop a relationship with a vet BEFORE you have an emergency**
  - ▶ Many vets will not see emergencies for non-clients.
  - ▶ Explore your options BEFORE you have an emergency.
  
- ▶ **Think about a plan for trailering**
  - ▶ Buy on, borrow one, trailer “phone chain”, trailers for hire
  - ▶ Practice trailering with your horse
  
- ▶ **Be Flexible**
  - ▶ You may have a favorite veterinarian, but overnights or on the weekends you will have to work with whomever is oncall.

Thank you for attending!

