

- EQUINE GASTRIC ULCER SYNDROME -

## GET A GOOD GUT FEELING

### WHAT IS IT?

Horses stomachs are small and continuously secrete acid to digest food. Horses evolved from grazing pasture and nowadays most performance horses are not continuously grazing. This means their stomachs may not contain enough feed at all times to neutralise this acid, which may result in Equine Gastric Ulcer Syndrome.

In symptomatic horses signs may include; reduced appetite, difficulty maintaining their weight, recurrent colic, changes in behaviour, or more severe complications of duodenal structures and under-performance. Cribbing or wood chewing have also been linked to gastric ulceration, as increased saliva or inflation of the stomach may temporarily relieve irritation from gastric acids.

In the foal symptoms can include frequently lying on their back, reduced suckling, grinding of the teeth, excessive salivation and diarrhea.

IF YOU SUSPECT YOUR HORSE HAS ULCERS PLEASE CONSULT YOUR VET.

### RISK FACTORS

There are many reasons why horses develop gastric ulceration. Some of the risk factors include confinement such as stabling, reduced pasture availability, reduced hay/roughage availability and increased grain feeding.

There are also some physical stressors such as intensive exercise, as well as NSAID (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory) use that may also contribute to gastric ulceration.



Increasing forage intake will increase chewing time which will increase saliva production helping to naturally buffer stomach acid.



RELIEF FROM ULCERS

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### Top tips for prevention

- ✓ Ideally provide conserved forage ad lib, but never less than 1.5% of bodyweight (dry matter) basis
- ✓ If appropriate (e.g. not laminitic) provide as much turnout time as possible, whilst monitoring the quality of the pasture
- ✓ Where possible take measures to reduce stress
- ✓ Adding chopped fibre to each meal can provide a fibre mat in the stomach which may be beneficial for buffering the acid in the stomach
- ✓ Ideally provide some fibre before any intense exercise is carried out to help reduce the risk of acid splashing on the non-glandular part of the stomach.
- ✓ Make sure water is available at all times
- ✓ Avoid feeding straw as the sole forage source



### MANAGEMENT

Suppressing the production of gastric acid has long been used successfully. While acid suppression does not contribute directly to healing, it does create an environment conducive for healing to occur. Feeding a diet that includes a natural equine antacid may contribute to the suppression of gastric acid.

Please note, feed management practices are designed to support the management of non-glandular ulcers. Please seek veterinary advice for the treatment/ management of glandular ulcers. PRODUCTS DO NOT TREAT OR CURE GASTRIC ULCERS.



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