

Recommended Care for your equine

Even routine horse care is a significant and ongoing expense. The cost of purchasing a horse is often much less than the cost of maintaining one for a year.

Make sure you are realistic about your ability to afford quality care before you buy a horse.

Equine Vet Service can aid you in your regular veterinarian check ups, start your horse on vaccination and deworming programs, do yearly dental exams and help you to maintain a healthy horse.

Food

Horses need a regular supply of food. In most cases, they need to have hay or pasture throughout the day, with additional grain feedings twice a day.

An average-size horse will eat about 20 lbs. of food, (hay, grass and grain combined) a day and drink at least eight gallons of water.

Because their stomachs are relatively small and their digestive systems surprisingly delicate, ideally horses need to nibble or graze throughout the day, rather than have one or two meals a day.

Hoof Care

Horses need regular hoof care. Plan to hire a farrier (blacksmith) every six to eight weeks for routine hoof trimming and/or shoeing.

Horses need regular veterinary care.

Horses need to be vaccinated against tetanus and other diseases.

The veterinarian will also provide routine dental care. Keep in mind that medical emergencies, which are always an unfortunate possibility, can cost several thousand dollars to treat.

Vaccinations

Vaccinations are an inexpensive way to ensure your horse's long term health.

Most horses are vaccinated twice a year. Spring and fall shots should be considered standard practice for all responsible horse owners. Show horses that travel to many events should be given additional booster shots because they come into contact with so many horses.

Included in most vaccination programs are inoculations for: influenza (flu) rhinopneumonitis (rhino), eastern and western strains of encephalomyelitis (sleeping sickness), and tetanus. Other inoculations are available for common illnesses like rabies and equine distemper (strangles), EPM and West Nile Virus.

Your veterinarian will recommend additional vaccines based on your geographical location and level of activity and travel. In addition to helping ensure that your horse will remain healthy, these vaccinations will give you a chance to meet with your veterinarian and get his informed opinion on your horse's condition.

EIA testing

Equine Infectious Anemia (E.I.A.) is a disease transmitted between horses by blood sucking insects. Every state has regulations regarding the requirement of documentation that horses are E.I.A. negative before they cross their borders. An E.I.A. test (commonly called a "Coggins" test) is required at horse shows, clinics, sales, events and campgrounds as well.

The penalties for not being able to provide an up-to-date, accurate Coggins certificate for each horse carries stiff penalties, so be sure you have this before you hit the road! Having a negative Coggins document is insurance that your horse will be welcome wherever you go.

Only a licensed veterinarian can draw the blood for this test, so ask for an E.I.A. test when your veterinarian gives your horses their spring inoculations.

Worming

Since horses are constantly exposed to intestinal worms from the ground they graze on, they must be dewormed every six to eight weeks. Carrying a heavy burden of worms can cause

serious illness or death in equines, so regular and timely treatment is crucial to your horse's health. We also recommend tube worming in the late fall and late spring.

Shelter

Horses need constant access to a dry, safe, comfortable shelter to protect them from rain, wind, and snow. In warm and sunny weather, the shelter you supply will provide your horse with much needed shade. At a minimum, you should have a well-constructed, three-sided shed into which your horse can retreat at all times. You will need to remove manure from the stall or shelter every day.

Exercise

Horses need exercise. To supplement the exercise your horse will get when you ride him, he should have a paddock or pasture in which to relax and stroll. No horse should spend all day confined in a stall, except on a veterinarian's recommendation. The pasture should be bordered by safe, sturdy fencing that will keep the horse safe and secure. Barbed wire is not an acceptable fencing material—it has been the cause of many serious injuries.

Health Care Essentials

Keep up to date with vaccinations.

Follow a suitable worming program.

Have your horses teeth checked regularly.

Feed regularly and according to work.

Have a farrier attend regularly to your horses feet.

Get to know your horse and what is normal for him on a day to day basis.

1. The horse is bright and alert with ears pricked and taking interest in his surroundings.
2. The coat is smooth and shiny and lying flat over the body
3. Eyes and nose are free of any discharge.
4. Limbs are free of any heat and swellings.
5. Stands squarely on all four feet.
6. Eating up well and chewing properly.
7. Manure should resemble damp balls that break up when hitting the ground and will vary in color slightly depending on diet.

Temperature: The normal temperature for a horse is 37-38°C or 99-100.5°F

Pulse: The normal pulse rate for a resting horse is 36 to 42 beats per minute. Young stock and ponies tend to be a bit faster.

Respiration: The normal respiration for a resting horse is 8 to 15 breaths per minute.

Your horse depends on your love, care, and commitment.

You'll show your love through grooming, petting, riding, and the occasional treat.

You must also show your commitment by providing for her needs 365 days a year, in good weather and bad.

With good care, your horse can live 35 years or more, so plan to enjoy a long and mutually rewarding relationship with your horse.