



KEY INDICATORS

Changes in these parameters are often the first sign that something is amiss with a horse's health.

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PULSE



Normal: At rest, a healthy horse's pulse will be approximately 30 to 40 beats per minute.

How to measure: Place three fingers against the thick artery that runs underneath the cheekbone on each side of the face. Press inward and upward. Count each surge of blood for 30 seconds. Multiply by two.

Call the veterinarian if your horse's resting pulse rate is greater than 60 beats per minute, or if his pulse is irregular or weak.

TEMPERATURE



Normal: A healthy horse's temperature will be between 99.5 and 101 degrees Fahrenheit.

How to measure: Lubricate a digital thermometer. Stand beside the horse's rump, facing his tail. Lift his tail and insert the thermometer into his anus. Keep it in place for as long as the manufacturer recommends. Remove it and note the reading.

Call the veterinarian if your horse has a high fever (104 degrees Fahrenheit or higher).

RESPIRATION



Normal: A healthy horse will take from 8 and 15 breaths per minute, depending on his size and the ambient temperature.

How to measure: Stand at the horse's shoulder, facing his hindquarters. Focus on the flank area, each rise and fall counts as one breathe.

Call the veterinarian if foam or chewed feed comes out of your horse's nostrils or they are unusually flared. Also seek veterinary assistance if your horse seems to struggle to breathe or is short of breath.