

Back Country First Aid for Horses



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Common Problems

- **Wounds**
- **Acute Lameness**
- **Colic**
- **Tying-up**
- **Eye Injuries**
- **Snake Bite**

First Aid Kit

- Bute
- Banamine
- Pen G
- DMSO
- Triple Antibiotic
Ophthalmic Ointment
- Syringes
- Needles
- Electrolytes



Bandage Materials

- Vet Wrap
- Sheet Cotton
- Elasticon
- 4X4 Pads
- AMD or Hydrasorb Pads
- Duct Tape/Gorilla Tape
- Hoof Pick
- Shoeing Equipment



Wounds

- **Stop Hemorrhage**
- **Protect important structures**
- **Prevent infection**

Stop hemorrhaging

Pressure bandage on leg wounds

- **Put 4X4's or Maxi pads against wound (lots)**
- **Tack pads down with elasticon or gauze**
(do not pull tight)
- **Apply sheet cotton**
- **Pull vet wrap tightly over sheet cotton**
 - **You can pull vet wrap very tight over cotton but never pull it or elasticon tight over a leg with no cotton material under it.**

Upper body wounds

- **Apply pressure with towels or coats**
- **Do not ligate vessels**
 - **Attempting to ligate vessels without proper equipment can make them bleed more**
- **Keep animal quiet. Do not attempt to move until hemorrhaging has completely stopped**
 - **This may take hours**
 - **Offer small amounts of water frequently**
 - **Do not let them “tank up” on water**
 - **May offer very small amounts of feed**

- When animal is capable of moving, go slow and make frequent stops to rest**
- If hemorrhaging begins again, stop and apply pressure.**
- Do not remove bandage, apply another, tighter bandage over the one that is already there.**

Protect important structures from contamination and further damage

– Important structures include

- Tendons
- Bones
- Joints
- Ligaments

– Apply bandage support

- This is similar to the bandage before but not as tight
- Use AMD pad against wound to help with superficial infection
 - Can be used against muscle, skin, bone and tendon
- Use cotton as a support
 - decrease movement and help support tendons and ligaments





Prevent Infection

– Penicillin or Uniprim

- Give 30cc Pen G once a day in the muscle for a 1100lb animal
- **MAKE SURE YOU DO NOT GIVE PENICILLIN IN A BLOOD VESSEL.**

– This will cause the horse to seizure and is very dangerous.

- If not familiar with intra muscular injections than do not use Penicillin. Use Uniprim instead

– Uniprim

- Give 2 scoops orally once daily for a 1100lb animal

– Do not recommend using ointments on wounds

- Decrease healing
- Increase contamination



Acute Lameness

- **Sole Abscess/bruising**
- **Swelling**
- **Fractures**

Sole abscess or bruising

- **Suddenly non weight bearing with no traumatic incident**
- **If comfortable with finding abscesses do so in the field with a hoof knife**
 - **Hot soak foot in Epsom salts and water**
 - **Keep dry and clean with a duct tape or Gorilla tape boot**
- **If not comfortable with finding abscesses, hot soak and pad sole with 4X4's and a duct tape boot**

Swelling in the leg with acute lameness

- Can be caused from a puncture wound, fracture, bowed tendons and strains
- Entire leg may be swollen
- DMSO sweat bandage for 24 hours
- 2 grams bute/1100lbs daily
- After 24 hour sweat bandage apply support bandage until horse is seen by a veterinarian
- Penicillin or Uniprim
 - Temperature > 101.0 F



Fractures

- **Often very poor prognosis**
- **Can sometimes only be found with radiographs**
- **Splint to immobilize fracture**
 - **Almost 1000lbs of weight on the leg**
 - **The splint should immobilize the joint above and the joint below the fracture site**
 - **If you don't the splint will act as a fulcrum and make the fracture worse**
- **If you can not find the fracture than it may not be a fracture (sole abscess)**
- **Do not give more than 2 grams of bute**
 - **Horse may become comfortable and use the leg**
- **Most often the horse will need to be euthanized**

Colic = abdominal pain

- **Many types of colic**
 - **Impaction**
 - **Decrease in water intake**
 - **Gas**
 - **Change of feed**
 - **Twisted intestine**
 - **Sand**
 - **Ulcers**
 - **Over use of NSAIDS**
 - **Stress**

- **Colic Treatment**

- **Give 10cc banamine per 1000lb animal**
 - No more than 10cc in a 12 hour period
- **Walk horse for 30 minutes**
 - After walking, if horse wants to lay down quietly, let them. If they try to roll keep them walking – head for town
- **Offer small amounts of water**
 - No more than ½ gallon at a time
- **DO NOT FEED.**
 - Even if horse improves do not feed for 24hrs. Then gradually put back on feed by letting graze for short intervals or handfuls of feed frequently

Tying-Up (rhabdomyolysis)

- Failure of the muscles to break up glycogen
- Muscles begin to have severe cramping which leads to muscle break down and severe pain.
- Often mistaken as colic because the horse is so painful
- Often seen after horses have been rested, then fed grain and exercised.

- **Tying-up treatment**
 - **Do not walk horse**
 - May be unable to walk
 - Don't attempt to walk to trailer unless it is very close
 - **Banamine???**
 - Helps with pain and discomfort
 - Hard on kidneys if horse is dehydrated
 - 3cc per 1000lbs initially – after 1 hour can be re-dosed.
 - Do not give a third dose without talking to your veterinarian
 - **Acepromazine**
 - Tranquilizer that may help with discomfort and muscle relaxation
 - Give 1cc in the muscle
 - **IV Fluids**
 - Usually only given by a veterinarian
 - **Offer water**
 - **Give 1 tube of electrolytes**

Eye Injuries

- **Very difficult to tell the severity of eye injuries without the right equipment**
- **Recommend treating all eye injuries with Triple Antibiotic Ophthalmic ointment 3 times a day until the eye can be better evaluated.**
- **Do not use an ointment with steroid in it**
 - **May cause the cornea to melt if there is an ulcer**
- **10cc Banamine**
 - **Helps with pain and inflammation**
 - **If you don't have banamine give 2 grams bute**
 - **Do not use bute and banamine in the same 24 hour period**



Snake Bite

- Most often on the face or legs



Face

- **The nose will swell – occluding the nostrils**
- **Keep an airway open**
 - **Place pieces of hose or 20cc syringe casing (with holes cut in ends) into nostrils**
 - **Place medially and ventrally**
 - **Should feel air coming from these objects after placement**
 - **If they fall out the horse is not swollen enough to need them**
 - **Swelling may be going down**
 - **If swelling is getting worse attempt to place again in 30-60 minutes**
 - **Leave in until they fall out**
- **Treat with injectable banamine and penicillin**
 - **No oral medication**
- **If the nose continues to swell get to a veterinarian**





Legs

- **Treat with banamine or bute**
- **Treat with Penicillin**
- **If leg is very swollen apply DMSO sweat bandage**

Horses should be examined by a veterinarian 3-6 months after the snake bite to examine for heart murmurs and metabolic disease

