



If your horse ever shows signs of colic, **don't wait – call your local vet centre clinic immediately.** It could save their life.



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Equine Colic: A serious condition but not always a death sentence

Colic. It's the word no horse owner wants to hear – and with good reason. Almost every horse person has a story about a friend, neighbour, or client who lost a beloved horse to colic. It's long been regarded as one of the most feared equine emergencies. While it certainly can be life-threatening, the truth is that the vast majority of colic cases are treatable and end well – especially when prompt veterinary care is involved.

So, what exactly is colic?

In horses, "colic" is simply a term that means abdominal or gut pain. It's not one specific disease but rather a symptom with a wide variety of potential causes. From a build-up of gas to a twisted bowel, colic can range from mild discomfort to a full-blown medical or surgical crisis. Horses are particularly prone to colic because large portions of their intestines are not firmly attached within the abdomen, allowing them to move more freely and increasing the risk of displacement or twisting. Almost all horses will experience colic at some point in their lives. Fortunately, most of these episodes are mild and respond quickly to treatment.

Knowing how to spot the signs early can save your horse's life. Mild colic might look like a quiet horse that's gone off their feed or just seems a little flat. But as pain escalates, so do the symptoms:

- Looking at or biting their flanks
- Repeatedly lying down and getting up
- Curling the upper lip
- Pawing at the ground

- Stretching as if to urinate
- Dog-sitting (hindquarters on the ground, forelimbs extended)
- Rolling, sometimes violently – risking injury or twisted gut
- Sweating, groaning, or distended abdomen
- Changes (or absence) in manure output.

Colic is undeniably serious – but it's not always fatal. The key to a good outcome is early recognition and swift veterinary intervention. Knowing the signs, having a plan, and managing your horse's health proactively will go a long way in keeping your equine companion safe, sound, and comfortable.

