



# FACT SHEET

Department of Animal Science, University of Connecticut

Effective Horse Management – Horse Health Series

## Signs of Health Problems: How to determine if your horse is not well

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Health problems are not always easy to detect. If you know what is normal for your horse then you may be able to tell right away when he is sick. Other signs than those presented here may also be associated with sickness or disease, so be sure to consult your veterinarian for assistance if you think something is not quite right. Better safe than sorry!

Common ailments and their symptoms in horses are listed below. This is not a comprehensive list. Be sure to consult your veterinarian when you notice something unusual.

Signs	Colic	Influenza	Laminitis	Strangles
Difficulty defecating	X (impaction)			
Depressed appetite		X		
Dry hard coughing		X		
Enlarged lymph nodes esp. between jaws close to the skin				X
Getting up and down frequently	X			
Heel to toe movement when walking			X	
High temperature 101-106 F				X
Increased pulse rate	X			
Kicking at belly	X			
Looking at sides	X			

Lying down frequently			X	
Pawing	X			
Pointing of front feet			X	
Reluctance to move			X	
Restless	X			
Sawhorse posture	X		X	
Severe pain	X		X	
Watery nasal discharge		X		

<b>Signs</b>	<b>EIA</b>	<b>EEE, WEE, VEE</b>	<b>Lyme Disease</b>	<b>Potomac Horse Fever</b>
Abnormal gait		X		
Anemia	X			
Changed attitude			X	
Circling		X		
Colic				X
Complete paralysis and death		X		
Depressed appetite	X			X
Diarrhea				X
Difficulty defecating		X		
Difficulty urinating		X		
Difficulty walking	X	X		
Drooping ears		X		
Drooping lower lip		X		
Drowsiness		X		
Fever 104-108 degrees F	X		sometimes	X
Fever that may be above 106 degrees F		X		
Head held low, food hanging from lips		X		
Hypersensitivity to sound		X		
Irritability			X	
Jaundice and edema of abdomen, sheath, scrotum and limbs	X			

Lameness, esp. larger joints			X	
Lameness shifting from limb to limb			X	
Laminitis			X	
Loss of weight	X			
Mild depression				X
Overexcited for a time		X		
Paralysis		X		
Restlessness		X		

<b>Signs</b>	<b>EIA**</b>	<b>EEE, WEE, VEE*</b>	<b>Lyme Disease</b>	<b>Potomac Horse Fever</b>
Severe colic				X
Severe depression	X			
Stiffness			X	
Tongue hanging out		X		
Unwillingness to work			X	
Weak	X			

\*EEE = Eastern Equine Encephalomyelitis

\*WEE = Western Equine Encephalomyelitis

\*VEE = Venezuelan Equine Encephalomyelitis

\*\*EIA = Equine Infectious Anemia

<b>Signs</b>	<b>Botulism</b>	<b>EPM</b>	<b>Rabies</b>	<b>Tetanus</b>	<b>West Nile Virus</b>
Changes in eating habits		X			
Circling		X			
Colic			X		
Death			X		X
Depressed appetite			X		
Difficulty breathing				X	
Difficulty walking	X	X		X	
Drooling	X				
Drooping tongue	X				
Facial paralysis		X	X		
Food accumulation in mouth	X				
Grinding of teeth			X		
Head tilt		X			
Hindleg paralysis			X		
Incoordination		X			X
Jaw spasms				X	
Lameness			X		
Muscle atrophy		X			

Muscle fasciculations					X
Muscle paralysis of limbs, jaw, tongue and pharynx	X				
Prolapse of the third eyelid			X		
Recumbency		X			X
Seizures		X			
Viciousness			X		

\*EPM = Equine Protozoal Myoencephalitis

**Acknowledgements:**

I am grateful for the reviews by Crystal Smith, Animal Science Extension Agent, Warren County Cooperative Extension Service, Virginia and Dr. Debra Hagstrom of the University of Illinois, Horse Extension Specialist.