

VITALS	NORMAL / HEALTHY	DIRECTION
Heart Rate	28 to 44 beats per minute	The best location for taking the heart rate is in the 'girth region' behind the left forelimb over the ribcage at the level between the shoulder and elbow. Pressing with firm but gentle contact with the flat end of the stethoscope on the horses' side and having some way of counting over a 15 second period, and multiplying the result by four. Taking the measurement for any longer and you may find your horse gets fidgety.
Respiratory Rate	12 to 24 breaths per minute	It is a good rule of thumb that, in the resting horse, you shouldn't really 'notice' them breathing. That is either significant nostril or abdominal wall movement.
Hydration	<p>Skin tent - skin instantly returns to normal position</p> <p>Tucked up - variable</p> <p>Water intake - 2-4ml/kg/hr with some variation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · A skin tent is a very crude measure of hydration status but, along with other clinical signs can be useful to you and your vet when deciding if further testing is required. So you need to 'pinch and pick up' the skin on the lower side of the neck in front of the shoulder pulling slightly away from the body and then quickly release to see if it instantly returns to normal position, or if it is delayed and lingers for a while. · Tucked up is a term owners may use to describe their horse, often when they have colic or for another reason they haven't been eating or drinking well. This describes the appearance of the abdomen at the level of the loin - it tends to be more concave and raised. This is a good observation, but shouldn't be relied upon to give a clinical indication of hydration status as it is influenced by many factors including but not limited to diet, fitness and breed type. · There is a guide to water intake which is 2-4ml/kg/hr or 1-2L/500kg/hr which equates to 24-48L/day/500kg horse. Many factors influence this including weather, exercise, type of feed (pasture vs hard feed or hay), and general health (some medical conditions influence water intake).
Temperature	37.4 to 38.4 Celsius	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Always make sure you have a handler standing with the head of the horse on the same side as you, stand close up to the horse's hind limb facing backwards, hold tail with your hand closest to the horse and insert thermometer and guiding index finger gently into the rectum and keep along the wall of the rectum to avoid testing manure temperature.

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Capillary Refill Time	Under two seconds	Gum colour or mucous membranes should be pale pink, moist and when you press on the gums with your index finger the gums with your index finger, the colour should return in under two seconds, also known as Capillary Refill Time (CRT).
Soundness and stance	Evenly weight bearing on all four limbs at rest without 'shifting' readily between the limbs while standing relatively squarely. Walking evenly without hesitation.	The horse standing so the hind limbs are camped under the body or forelimbs camped out, as well as the horse shifting weight frequently between limbs are indicators of discomfort and should be investigated. This is different from the 'resting' stance that horses often take with one hind limb or the other for periods of time. Another indicator of an unsound horse is when they appear to be favouring one or more legs, unwilling to weight bear in the normal manner.
Nasal discharge	None or a small stream or moisture of a clear nature coming from the nostrils.	Discharge that is discoloured or in increased volumes warrants further investigation.

Other vitals that may assist with a diagnosis and/or treatment include urine and manure output, appetite and demeanour.

Although this information has been consulted upon and verified by a qualified Veterinarian specialising in Equine care it is not intended to substitute the advice from a Veterinarian. This information is provided for educational and informational purposes, if your animal requires veterinary attention, please contact one as soon as practical.

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