



Quality and Concern in Equine Practice
Serving Colorado Springs and Southern Colorado

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Colorado Equine Veterinary Services,

A full-service, equine wellness, critical care and ambulatory practice.

- ◆ General Medical
- ◆ Preventive Medicine
- ◆ Diagnostic Exams
- ◆ Reproductive
- ◆ Minor Surgery
- ◆ Lameness Exams
- ◆ Complementary Medicine

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Wounds, Cuts and Lacerations

The most common equine emergencies are cuts, lacerations, bruises and abrasions.

- **Cut** - an incision or wound made by any sharp edge or instrument.
- **Laceration** - a wound produced by the tearing of body tissue.

Wounds can be partial skin thickness (grazes), full skin thickness, or

puncture wounds that penetrate the skin leaving a very small surface wound.

Different types of

Help your veterinarian by carefully describing the problem.

wounds require different treatments.

- **Grazes**- are more likely to contain foreign matter that the veterinarian will need to clean out. Wounds that are the full thickness of the skin frequently require sutures.
- **Puncture Wounds**- may look minor, but they may indicate damage to deeper structures.

When you call your vet, be prepared...

to answer the following questions. This will help your vet determine what immediate actions you need to take.

- Is the wound a cut, a laceration, or a puncture?
- What size is the wound?
- Where is the wound located?
- When did the wound occur?
- What is the degree of environmental contamination (dirt, debris, etc.)?
- What is the amount of tissue damage?
- Is there a foreign body or material in the wound?
- How much blood has the horse lost?
- Does the bleeding stop with direct pressure?
- Is the horse lame?
- Does the wound involve a bone, tendon or joint?
- If it is a puncture wound, what caused the wound?
- Are there signs of infection?
- Is an eye involved?
- Is there a nail in the sole?

While waiting for your Veterinarian

Be careful!

Every horse will behave unpredictably when in pain.

DO

If possible, move the horse to a safe place to prevent further injury.

Calm the horse down

Get assistance, you will need someone to hold the horse while you examine the wound.

If possible, examine the wound. Do not try and do too much without help; even the most placid horses will behave unpredictably if in pain and you may injure yourself.

If your horse has profuse bleeding, your primary concern is to stop the bleeding.

Immediately apply pressure directly to the wound. Place a clean dressing (sterile absorbent pad) directly over the source of the bleeding and apply firm, even pressure with your hand. You may need to apply a pressure bandage.

DO NOT

Do not apply any medication, disinfectant or ointment to the wound without your veterinarian's consultation. These may cause tissue damage that can interfere with suturing.

Consult with your veterinarian before attempting to clean a wound, remove debris, or penetrating objects. This could start uncontrollable bleeding or do further damage to the wound.

In general, the less that is done to the wound before the veterinarian arrives, the better the outcome.

Do not medicate or tranquilize your horse unless specifically directed to do so by your veterinarian.

If your horse has suffered severe blood loss or shock, the administration of certain drugs can be life threatening.

If blood soaks through a bandage while you are waiting for your veterinarian to arrive, place a second bandage over it as before. Do not remove it yourself, as this could disrupt blood clots, and may result in more bleeding.

A properly applied pressure bandage will control bleeding, minimize swelling, provide support for an injured limb, absorb fluid from a wound, and protect a wound from contamination or additional trauma, all without constricting normal circulation. If swelling develops above or below the bandage or lameness increases, the bandage may be too tight.

To loosen a bandage that appears too tight:

- Cut through the outer support layers of the bandage, but leave it in place.
- Wrap a new bandage more loosely around the first one.
- Leave both bandages in place until your veterinarian arrives, be ready to point out the exact location of the injury.