

What You Need To Know About Gastric Ulcers

What is the Prevalence of Gastric Ulcers in Horses?



- 93% of race horses
- 58% of show horses
- 25-50% of foals

What Causes Gastric Ulcers?



- High grain, low forage diets
- Meal feeding
- Long periods of fasting

Clinical Signs of Gastric Ulcers



- Loss of appetite
- Weight loss
- Poor body condition
- Irritability and attitude change
- Abdominal discomfort
- Decreased performance

Diagnosing of Gastric Ulcers



- Consult your veterinarian
- Fast for minimum of 12 hours
- Water withheld for 4 hours
- Gastric endoscopy

Treatment



- Acid pump inhibitors, i.e. Omeprazole
- Maintain stomach pH of greater than 4
- Management adjustments to reduce ulcer opportunity

Prevention & Management



- Feed forage frequently or offer free choice pasture to stimulate saliva production
- Add alfalfa forage to diet as calcium is known to reduce acidity
- Avoid exercising horse on empty stomach
- Be cautious with anti-inflammatory drug use
- Limit stressful situations
- Reduce amount of concentrates fed

References

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