



Taking Temperature, Pulse and Respiration:

Temperature:

Materials needed - KY Jelly, thermometer (either mercury or digital)

Lubricate thermometer with KY Jelly. Make sure you have a trusted handler holding your horse. Stand level with your horse's hip, facing backwards. Reach around, lift your horse's tail and insert the thermometer into rectum. Wait for 3-120 seconds (according to manufacturer's directions).

Normal resting temperature: 99.0- 101.0 °F

Pulse:

Materials needed - nothing and/or stethoscope

To take pulse - use your pointer and middle fingers together under either side of the mandible (lower jaw bone) to feel the facial artery. Don't press too hard!

To listen to heart rate - Listen for heart rate with stethoscope just in front of girth, 5 inches up from bottom of chest. You might have to push the stethoscope forward under the horse's elbow in order to hear the heart beat, especially if the horse is large and/or overweight. Each "lub-dub" counts as one heart beat.

Normal resting heart rate: 24-40 bpm (beats per minute)

Respiration:

Materials needed - nothing

Watch the horse's flank for the rise and fall of the chest with each inspiration, or put your palm in front of a nostril and feel each breath.

Normal resting respiration rate: 8-20 bpm (breathes per minute)

Mucous Membranes (Gums):

Materials needed – nothing

Lift your horse's upper lip so you are able to visualize the gums.

Gums should be: moist to the touch (not tacky or dry) and pink in color (bubblegum color).

Capillary Refill Time – Press your finger against your horse's gums above the teeth, let go, and count the seconds it takes to return to normal color.

Normal CRT: should be less than 2 seconds

If your horse is displaying any abnormal vital signs, please call your veterinarian immediately.

In addition, if your horse stops eating or is lethargic, please do not hesitate to call 804.333.0333