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## ARK VETERINARY CENTRE

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## equine factsheet

This factsheet will give you some valuable information regarding your horse and some of the services we provide. We hope this will help you make a major contribution to your horses longevity, happiness and quality of life by providing him/her with good nutrition, loving attention in a safe, clean environment and regular checkups by the veterinary practice.

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## Vaccinations

The common vaccinations in horses are for influenza and tetanus. Influenza is caused by a virus and leads to respiratory problems. It is highly infectious and therefore vaccination is recommended. Tetanus is caused by the bacteria *clostridium tetanii* and can gain entry by any little cuts which can lead to muscle paralysis. If a horse is cut and not vaccinated for tetanus it is advisable to contact us to administer some tetanus antitoxin to help prevent any problems.

The primary course for tetanus and flu can be given from 6 months old which continues with another injection 6 weeks later and then 6 months after that. Horses should then get yearly boosters for flu and every 2 years for tetanus.

## Teeth

Teeth are vitally important for grasping and chewing. The horse is born with a finite amount of teeth which continually erupt. Thus unless there is adequate wear horses are prone to overgrowths which can lead to quidding, and reluctance to eat. Other problems include displacements of or delayed eruption leading to abnormal tooth wear. If this happens your vet should be contacted. It is recommended that they get a 6 monthly check up to prevent such problems occurring and plenty of good quality roughage to maintain good oral health.

## Laminitis

Laminitis is a condition affecting the blood vessels in the foot. There are many factors thought to predispose to this condition including: being overweight, too much concentrate, concussion, lush spring grass and steroids. This leads to the blood vessels in the foot becoming inflamed and the horse becomes reluctant to walk. The digital pulses become raised and the horse will try to rest its toes. If the condition is chronic overgrowths occur leading to an Aladdin's slipper appearance. The best way to manage laminitis is to stable the horse on soft bedding, frog supports, corrective shoeing and decrease dietary energy content. We are able to administer pain relief and advise on the best way of managing the condition.

## Skin disease

Sweet itch – a condition caused by midges and usually occurs in the summer. It commonly affects the mane and base of the tail but can affect the whole body. Sweet itch can be an allergic reaction or as a direct result of the midges biting. The horse will become very itchy and pull hair out of the worst affected areas. Treatment can include stabling during the day, insect repellents, rugs and if necessary insect proof the stable.

## Lice

These can affect any part of the body leading to hair loss and the horse being very itchy. Treatment is usually with an insecticidal wash.

## Mud fever

Caused by *dermatophilus congolensis* and leads to hair loss, itchy skin and sores. It usually affects the feet but can occur on any part of the body. The best treatment is to wash the affected areas with hibiscrub or iodine and possibly antibiotics if it's very severe.

## Pre- purchase examination (Vetting)

This is a useful tool when buying a horse. The vet examines the horse looking for any problems and these are conveyed back to the potential buyer to aid the purchase decision. A vetting includes examining the horse at rest – heart, eyes, and conformation; then at walk and trot. The vet will look at the horse in relation to the proposed function and pass or fail the horse depending on faults found.

## Worming

The main worms in horses are round worms and tapeworms. These are important throughout the warmer months and are ingested from the pasture. Possible problems are weight loss, diarrhoeas and even colic. A worm control programme should be used on an annual basis and should be used in combination with pasture management and faecal samples to determine worming requirements.

In the practice we would advise in any worm control programme that the following is included.

- Tapeworm treatment in spring and autumn
- Small strongyle treatment in autumn and newly purchased animals
- Bots are treated in autumn/winter
- An annually rotated wormer is used at the required interval during the grazing season April to October

## Passports

It is now a legal requirement that every horse has a passport. These include a drawing of the horse and also any medications given. The main purposes of the passport system are to identify each horse and also decide whether the horse will be allowed to enter the food chain.

## Castration

This is normally done as a yearling, when both testicles have descended. The best time of year is spring or autumn as there are fewer flies. This operation is generally carried out under anaesthesia and if done at home is best done in a field to decrease the chance of an accident. It is also a good idea to exercise the horse after the operation as it can help decrease the swelling around the scrotal area.