

Coronavirus update:

We hope that this newsletter finds you fit and well. We thank you for your support during the last couple of months as we find ways to carry out veterinary work in a safe way for both you and your horses and for our staff.

During the current UK situation we would like to reassure all our clients that we are providing our usual emergency service, should you need us.

In addition to this, we are keen to assist our clients with less urgent conditions in a safe, and responsible way. In order to do this, we would like to ask all clients with ANY work they would like carried out to give us a call on 01670 897597 to discuss their needs. This will allow us to risk assess the situation so we are able to provide a visit (where appropriate) in a safe manner for both you and us. This will include questions to establish whether you are shielding, have been in contact with any confirmed cases of coronavirus and whether you think we will be able to examine your horse tied up, with you nearby.

Where you feel you would prefer telephone advice, we can provide a discounted telephone consultation (£25) and view photos and videos you may have, following which we can prescribe any drugs required.

We ARE carrying out vaccinations at present, following the risk assessment mentioned above. If you have any questions at all, please don't hesitate to call the clinic on 01670 897597.

Myopathy / Tying-up:

After this period of lockdown, some horses will start to come back to work after a long period of rest. This exercise after a long period of rest could mean an increased risk of suffering Exertional Rhabdomyolysis, also known as Tying-up or Monday Morning Disease. This consists in a disturbance of the muscles in the horse, causing painful cramps and muscle damage, similar to the pain we suffer after doing hard exercise for the very first time and we struggle to move the following day as everything aches!

The clinical signs can vary between the different grades of presentation, but usually all the episodes occur after exercise. Horses can appear stiff, particularly in the hind legs and unwilling to move, show abnormal sweating and even swelling and hardening of muscles, especially in hindquarters. Dark red or brown urine can be seen. In more severe cases, the horse can be extremely painful and can have a similar presentation to colic.

Diagnosis can be made on the basis of clinical signs and can be confirmed with a blood sample, where the enzymes related with muscle damage are markedly increased. If the condition reoccurs frequently, a muscle biopsy might be suggested to identify the cause. If you suspect that your horse may be tying-up, keep it still to reduce further damage and contact your vet. While you wait, provide fresh water and encourage it to drink. The initial treatment consists of reducing pain and inflammation, and restoring fluids and electrolytes in the more severe cases. This will be followed by rest until the horse is comfortable, turnout can be useful at this time before returning gradually to normal management as planned by your vet. If there is an underlying cause, this should be addressed to prevent further episodes.

Foaling

If you are expecting a foal this season – congratulations! We are always available for advice on the phone but here is a quick guide to your new foal's first few days.

Foaling

Normal gestation of a horse is approximately 340 days (320-360 days). Before foaling, you may observe signs from the mare such as relaxation of the hindquarter muscles, lengthening of the vulva, udder enlargement and 'waxing up'.

When labour starts, there are three normal stages:

Uterine contractions and foal turning – signs such as sweating, walking, restlessness, ending with the rupture of the foetal membranes. This stage can last hours in some mares.

Delivery – the foal should be expelled within 10-30 minutes of the 'water's' breaking, with two front feet and then a nose. If this stage takes more than 30 minutes this is an emergency, and you must phone us immediately. Quietly observe your mare during this stage and try not to interfere, apart from gently removing the membranes from around the foals nose and mouth when these appear.

Delivery of the placenta – this should occur within 3 hours. Please keep the placenta for the vet to inspect. If the placenta has not passed in the first 2-3 hours, please call us immediately as a retained placenta represents a significant health risk to the mare, so is an emergency in horses.

Newborn Foal

The first thing to check is that the foal is breathing. It should quickly right itself and sit up. Within 15-30 minutes it should be alert and beginning to make attempts to stand. Within 1 hour it should be able to stand and start to look for the mare's udder. Within 2 hours the foal should have had its first suckle from the mare.

During the first few hours of life the foal should pass its first faeces – meconium. This is very dark brown or black. After this the foal will pass yellow milk faeces.

Colt foals will urinate for the first time at about 6 hours old, fillies at about 10-12 hours.

Healthy Foals

A healthy foal will nurse 5-7 times an hour during the day, it will urinate every time it stands up and sleep frequently. A good sign of a healthy foal is it should be very alert, difficult to catch and should go to the mare when disturbed.

Foal check

Please do call to discuss with a vet once your mare has foaled and we will decide the most appropriate time to visit and exam the mare and foal. We will do a thorough physical examination and look for any abnormalities, as well as taking a blood sample to check the foal has had enough colostrum (usually between 12&24hrs after birth). We will also check the mare did not sustain any injuries during foaling and check her udder, and check the placenta is intact and healthy.

Problems

Unfortunately, we occasionally do encounter problems with foaling and new born foals, and if you are concerned it is always best to give us a call to put your mind at rest. If you are expecting a foal then let us know where you are, and when it is due.

Further information

For further information please see out new CVS YouTube channel—register from early access at: <http://www.cvs-equine.video/>

