

VITAL SIGNS

Adult Horses	Normal	How to Assess	Be Concerned When
Heart Rate (beats per min.)	24-48 beats/min	Take Pulse where the facial artery passes under the lower jaw. Using two fingers, locate the artery, count number of pulses for 15 seconds, multiply by 4 to obtain pulse rate	Pulse rate sustained over 60 bpm when horse is cooled down and calm
Respiratory Rate	6 – 20 breaths/min	When listening to the lungs, most noises should be heard over a 3 to 4 inch section of chest wall. Place a stethoscope 5 inches above the elbow. You should hear gentle blowing sounds, similar to someone blowing on a hot drink. Listen for unimpeded airflow.	Signs of congestion: Loud sound heard over a large chest area. Bubbling sounds, similar to someone blowing through a straw into a liquid *a high pitched squeak *Silence
Temperature	99.5° – 101.5°	Lubricate an equine thermometer, partially insert into horse's rectum, tilted slightly. Hold for a full minute, wipe clean and read	Temperatures over 103° Indicate a serious disorder, contact your veterinarian immediately
Mucous membranes	Pale Pink	Observation	Bright red, white or blue tint
Capillary Refill Time	1 to 2 seconds	Briefly press a thumb against your horse's gums. Gums should turn white, then pink, in no more than 2 seconds	Over 5 seconds
Gut Sounds	Always Present on both sides	Listen in the area behind the ribcage	Be concerned if you do not hear anything
Hydration	After "pinch test" the skin flattens immediately	Pinch Test – pinch your horse's neck pulling up, skin should flatten immediately upon release	If the skin stays "tented" the horse may be dehydrated
FOALS			
Temperature	Increase the first four days and then plateaus at 100° - 102°		
Heart Rate	60 – 110 beats/min		
Respiratory	25 – 60 breaths/min		