



Foals & mares

MANAGING CHALLENGES

With any pregnant horse or mare and foal duo, there are bound to be tricky situations to navigate. While some are temporary, others are more serious and should be acted upon quickly. Here are a few scenarios to watch for as you monitor the overall health and well-being of your horses.



BEWARE OF COLIC

Abdominal issues are especially tricky for a pregnant mare. In late pregnancy, episodes of colic may be more common due to lack of abdominal space. Rapid changes in diet or poor hydration can also impact gut health.

To help: Be proactive and reduce the risk of colic by maintaining your horse's overall gut health. Watch for any signs of abdominal discomfort or going off feed. Each case of colic is unique, so treat early and don't hesitate to contact your veterinarian.

RELUCTANT NURSING

Any signs of sensitivity when the foal approaches or aversion to nursing may indicate the mare is having pain. Look for any signs of excess fluid (edema) or mammary issues (mastitis).

To help: Work to identify the cause and monitor closely. Determine if a fever is present. In cases of mastitis, antibiotics may be needed to resolve the issue.



ORPHANED FOAL

A foal might be suddenly on their own and need intervention. If you encounter nursing problems or a low milk supply, failure to bond or even the loss of a mare, immediate action is needed. In any orphan situation, the foal will depend on you to provide both care and nutrition.

To help: In some cases, a surrogate mare can step in to take care of the orphan. If that is not possible, start scheduled feedings right away. Implement a feeding program that includes a balance of nutrients for their growth. You may need to incorporate milk replacer for a short time — based on their age.

PROBLEM PARASITES

Horses under the age of 18 months are the most susceptible to parasites. Parasites can be responsible for intestinal disturbances, lung diseases or issues breathing, as well as complications with joint development and proper growth. You should work closely with your veterinarian to monitor and treat any suspected parasites.

To help: Practicing responsible pasture management is key in reducing your horse's chance of contracting parasites. Young horses should only be turned out in clean, uncrowded pastures and paddocks. Manure should be removed from these fields regularly to limit your horse's exposure. Be sure to ask your veterinarian about common parasites in your region and the signs and symptoms to look out for.



Keep a watchful eye on your mare and foal as they transition rapidly through the life stages that follow birth. You can help to influence positive outcomes simply by making observations, providing thoughtful care and engaging your veterinarian when more complex help is needed.

Questions about your horse's feeding program? We're here for you — contact a Triple Crown Nutrition expert today.

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