Vital Signs, How to Check Your Horse's

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temperature **pulse** & respiration

When you know what TPR (temperature, pulse, and respiration) is normal for horses, it will better enable you to take care of your horse when he is sick. Print this out and have it handy in your barn, stable, or your horse's stall. The following will help you care for your horse.

Temperature: 99°-101°F. The temperature may increase by 2 or 3 degrees due to the ambient (outside) temperature, level of exercise, or degree of dehydration. A horse's temperature is taken rectally, using a digital or fluid thermometer.

Pulse/Heart Rate: 32-48 beats per minute. Younger horses usually have a higher heart rate than older horses. Age, ambient (outside) temperature, humidity, exercise, and excitement can all have an effect on a horse's heart rate. A horse's pulse can be taken on the inside of the jaw, or on the ankle. The heart rate can also be checked using a stethoscope over the ribs, just behind the elbow.

Respiratory Rate: 12-16 breaths per minute. Like the pulse rate, respiratory rate can be influenced by environmental factors and excitement/stress. The respiratory rate can be measured by watching the nostrils or flanks and counting the number of times the horse breathes out. If the respiratory rate exceeds the heart rate, a veterinarian should be contacted immediately.

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