



BASIC HORSE CARE FOR ADULT HORSES IN WESTERN WASHINGTON

1. Strong, tight fencing. Barbed wire should not be used with horses, especially for con-fined areas. Also, field fencing is not recommended for confinement areas. Reinforcing any fencing with a strand of hot wire along the inside (chest height on the horse) provides a psychological barrier horses are likely to respect Any type of wire should be tight and frequently checked for becoming loose. Make a habit of regularly walking your fence lines and inspecting them for problems.
2. Clean Pastures. Inspect your pastures regularly to make sure there are no sharp objects horses can get hurt on. Watering and feeding containers should be free of sharp edges. Be sure your pastures are free of poisonous plants. Contact your local county Cooperative Extension, Conservation District or Natural Resources Conservation Service for more information on pasture management and plants which are toxic to livestock.
3. A clean, dry place to eat. Preferably a clean, well ventilated stall. It is most natural for a horse to eat with its head lowered - this helps with clearing their respiratory system. Never feed in the mud. Feeding on sand or muddy ground can lead to ingestion of dirt, causing serious digestion problems.
4. Twice a day feeding minimum. Alfalfa hay is higher in protein and energy but for most horses, grass hay such as Timothy or a mix of grass and alfalfa would be best. Horses should be supplemented with grain only if your horse cannot maintain its weight on hay alone. A good rule of thumb for feeding is 1½ pounds of hay per 100 pounds of body weight. This would be 15 pounds of hay for an average 1,000 lb. horse. Always purchase green, leafy hay which is free of dust and mold. A horse should never be fed hay or grain which is moldy, dusty, weedy or contains foreign objects. Make diet changes gradually over a period of days. Consult your veterinarian for the feeding program best suited for your horse.
5. A selenium supplement. Selenium should be supplemented to all horses in the western Washington. Horse Guard, Dynamite, and Northwest Supplement are examples of vitamin supplements containing adequate amounts of selenium. Pure selenium is available from your veterinarian or vet supply catalogues. Consult your veterinarian on the correct dosage.
6. Water. A horse drinks 8 to 12 gallons of water per day. Water should be fresh and available at all times. Be sure your horse's water container is free of rough edges and rust. It should be scrubbed clean of algae and dirt regularly. In cold weather, be sure your horse's water is not frozen or too cold or they may not drink an adequate amount.
7. A salt/mineral block. Available at all times.
8. Freedom from competition. Separate horses to feed them. This prevents fights, injuries and weight loss problems. Don't over-stock your pastures or crowd horses together.
9. A screened fly mask during fly season and a good residual fly repellent. Your local Extension Service or Conservation District has more information available on insect control (including biological insect control) for livestock owners.
10. Vaccinations:
 - Tetanus - once a year
 - Influenza and Rhinopneumonitis - minimum of once or twice a year (stabled or show horses may need it more often - consult your veterinarian)
 - Encephalomyelitis (East/West) - once a year in spring or summer if the horse ever leaves western Washington Potomac
 - Horse Fever - rare in Washington but the WA State Veterinarian recommends vaccinating for this serious disease



Livestock Basic Horse Care

11. Deworming. Paste wormers are purchased at feed stores or from vet supply catalogues. This should be done every 6-8 weeks. Consult your veterinarian. Stalls and confinement areas should have manure removed from them every 1-3 days to avoid from horses reinfesting themselves with worms.
12. Stool samples. This should be done 2-4 times a year to insure your deworming program is working properly.
13. Dental exam. Done once a year by a veterinarian.
14. Stocked first aid kit.
15. Regular pasture and manure management program. Maintaining healthy pastures and planning for manure disposal are an important aspect of horse care. A 1000 lb. horse produces about 45 pounds of manure per day, equaling about 1 cubic foot per day. With bedding, that comes to 2 cubic feet per day. It is important that you have a plan to utilize the manure as compost in pastures, garden or lawn, or have it hauled away on a regular basis. In addition, pastures in western Washington simply cannot survive overgrazing or constant trampling during the winter months. For information or help with pasture, manure and mud management, contact your local Conservation District, Natural Resources Conservation Service or Cooperative Extension.

KEEP IN MIND: Always consult your veterinarian on the health care program best for your horses or if you have problems or questions.

SOURCE: Spring Lake Equine Veterinary Associates, Inc., P.S.
18403 SE 272nd, Kent, WA 98042 (206) 639-2909

Alayne Blickle Spring '94