



Equine Gastric Ulcer Syndrome

Did you know **1 in 3** horses suffer from **Equine Gastric Ulcer Syndrome?**

EGUS describes a diverse group of diseases causing areas of “**ulceration**” to the stomach lining, exacerbated by prolonged exposure to the stomach acid. These areas of erosion can vary in severity and are graded on a scale between 0 and 4. This is in order to monitor improvements or deterioration in the condition.

Symptoms

Symptoms are non-specific and vary for each individual horse. These may include:

- Recurrent low grade colic
 - Reduced appetite
 - weight loss/ poor condition
 - Dull coat
 - Underperformance
 - Behavioural changes
 - “Cribbing” and “Wood chewing” have also been linked to EGUS.
- Some or more of the symptoms could suggest that your horse may require a Gastroscopy in order to diagnose EGUS. These symptoms could also be indicative of other conditions such as a worm burden or hind gut issues.

Diagnosis

Before a diagnosis is made, it is beneficial for the vet to have a detailed history the horses:

- Symptoms
- Exercise regime
- Diet
- Turnout and management

Your vet will then conduct a Gastroscopy as this is the most accurate diagnostic tool.



Procedure

A gastroscopy is a simple and painless procedure for the horse.

In order to carry out a gastroscopy, your horse will be starved for 18hrs to ensure the stomach is empty. A 3-meter camera will be passed through the nose, down through the oesophagus into the stomach.



Our vets will manipulate the camera to view the entire stomach. Paying particular attention to:

- The **Cardia** (the sphincter from the oesophagus to the stomach)
- The **glandular region** and **non-glandular** (squamous) regions of the stomach.
- **Margo Plicatis** (the line between the glandular and non-glandular regions of the stomach).
- **Pylorus** (the sphincter exiting the stomach)
- **Duodenum** – entrance to the small intestine

There are two different types of lining of the horses stomach; 1) non-glandular (white in picture above) 2) Glandular (pink in pictures above). It is now known that factors causing ulceration in the squamous and the glandular regions differ. Therefore, treatment approaches based on the location and severity will be discussed during your consultation.

Treatment

If your horse is diagnosed with EGUS, the vet may suggest changes to your horse’s current management in order to reduce the risk of further ulceration and to prevent reoccurrences.

A course of **Omeprazol** treatment which you may know as “**Gastroguard**” or “**Peptizole**” is usually prescribed. This type of medication is very effective as it suppresses the amount of stomach acid produced, which encourages an environment within the stomach which allows it to heal itself.



The vet may also advise you to feed supportive supplements such as our “**Blaircourt Gastric Aid**”