

Top Four “Must-Haves” for Equine Emergencies

There are certain items horse owners need in order to be efficient and effective when an emergency arises. Furthermore, caretakers need to become familiar with these tools and understand how to use them in the proper fashion. These necessities will also buy time for the veterinarian in case he or she has more than one emergency to attend.

First on the list is an injection of flunixin meglumine. Most horse owners and veterinarians commonly refer to this medication as Banamine®. It is routinely used in emergency situations for pain relief and as an anti-inflammatory. Situations where this would be indicated include traumatic events, colic, and conditions that may cause a fever. The normal dose for an adult horse (one thousand pounds) is ten ccs. It can be given in the muscle during emergency crises. Remember to call the veterinarian first before administering any medication.

The next item that one must have is a rectal thermometer. Most human glass or digital thermometers are sufficient to use in the horse. Being able to use this will provide a valuable piece of information to the veterinarian when you contact them initially. Normal temperatures range from 99° F to 101° F. Cause for concern arises when temperatures rise above 102° F. This will allow the veterinarian to triage emergency cases more efficiently, and in turn, service the client better.

The third “must-have” is a minimal supply of bandage materials, and this includes sheet cotton and some sort of bandage tape such as Vet-Wrap®. These are the minimum materials required to stop bleeding and keep wounds fresh and clean. If the veterinarian is going to be more than five or six hours away, a dry bandage will be sufficient. However, if it is going to be more than six hours, one may use a wet bandage to help preserve damaged tissue until the veterinarian arrives. It is also important to bandage open leg wounds if transporting the injured animal to the hospital.

Last of all, but most important, one must have a horse trailer readily available. If one does not own a trailer, then contact a neighbor and ask politely if it may be used for emergencies. This must be set up ahead of time before an emergency crisis arises. It is wise to have a primary and secondary mode of transportation in the event that the first option is unavailable. Usually horse people do not mind helping each other out when it comes to the welfare of the livestock. In most situations, hauling horses to a veterinary facility is the most effective, efficient, and economical way to handle equine emergencies.

Although there are many other items horse owners could have in the event of an emergency, these are the most important. Once again, they are banamine, a thermometer, bandage materials, and access to a trailer. We, as responsible livestock owners, owe it to the animals to provide the best care possible. These necessities will help the veterinarian provide a better service for your animals as well. Before using any of these tools, have your veterinarian show you how to properly use them as some veterinarian’s opinions differ from others in the way that cases are treated. As one should always do in the case of an emergency, call the veterinarian first before using any of these items.