

Adult Horse Vital Signs*

Vital Sign	Average Measurement/Indicator	How to Measure
Temperature	99-101 degrees F	Insert digital rectal thermometer with lubrication. Attach string to avoid losing it.
Pulse (heart rate)	30-40 beats per minute resting	1) Stethoscope- use on left side behind horse's elbow OR 2) Place finger (not thumb) on artery that passes under lower jaw
Respiration	8-12 breaths per minute resting	Watch or feel ribcage/abdominals expand and contract OR Place hand in front of nostrils
Capillary refill (time it takes color to return to gums after pressing)	2 seconds	Press on gum tissue adjacent to teeth with thumb
Peristaltic (gut) sounds	Gurgling noise	1) Facing the horse's tail, press ear to horse's flank in front of the point of hip preferably on the right side OR 2) Listen with stethoscope on either side
Blood circulation	<p><u>Color Indicators</u></p> <p>Moist pink: Healthy normal circulation</p> <p>Very pale pink: Capillaries contracted. Indicates fever, blood loss or anemia</p> <p>Bright red: Capillaries enlarged. Indicates toxicity or mild shock</p> <p>Gray or blue: Severe shock, depression, illness</p> <p>Bright yellow: Associated with liver problems</p>	Observation of color of mucous membranes which are the lining of horse's eyelids, gums and inside of nostrils.

*The information presented is for an average adult horse. Some pony, foal, yearling and younger horse's vital signs are different. This information is not intended as medical advice. Call your veterinarian immediately if you observe any abnormality in your horse's vital signs.