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Normal Parameters in the Adult Horse and Newborn Foal

Measurement	Adult	Newborn
Temperature	37.2-38.5°C (99-101°F)	37.5-38.9°C (99.5-102.1°F)
Pulse/Heart Rate	28-44 beats per minute	80-100 beats per minute
Respiration	10-24 breaths per minute	20-40 breaths per minute
Mucous membranes	Moist, healthy "salmon" pink colour	
Capillary refill time*	2 seconds or less	
Gut sounds	Gurgling, gaslike growls, "tinkling" sounds (fluid), and occasionally "roars"	

*Time it takes for the gums to return to pink after being pressed with a finger

Examine your horse regularly so you know what is normal for them

Common Mistakes

- Not leaving the thermometer in long enough (false low temperature reading)
- Putting the thermometer straight into a rectum full of faeces - put thermometer in and hold to the side of the rectal wall so you are measuring the temperature of the horse and not the faeces!
- Taking vital signs on a nervous horse (horses' pulse and respiration rates can increase dramatically if they are nervous)
- Allowing the horse to sniff your hand to measure respiration rate (they will sniff far more quickly than their regular breathing rates)
- Double-counting heartbeats (lub-dub=one beat)