

Equine Vital Signs

Vital Sign	Normal Range/Value	How to Check/Additional Information
Temperature	99-101.5°F	Take rectally with a thermometer secured by a string. Call a vet if over 102°F.
Pulse	35-40 beats per minute (adult at rest)	Find facial artery at the bottom of the jaw. Count for 15 seconds, multiply by 4.
Respiration	8-15 breaths per minute (adult at rest)	Observe or feel the ribcage/belly for one minute. Count one inhale and one exhale as one breath.
Gut Sounds	3-4 gurgling sounds per minute	Use a stethoscope or ear against the horse's barrel just behind the last rib. Check both sides.
Dehydration (Pinch Test)	Skin flattens back in less than 1 second	Pinch skin on the neck; if it does not flatten quickly, the horse may be dehydrated.
Capillary Refill Time	1-2 seconds	Press thumb against gums for two seconds to make a white mark. Color should return within 1-2 seconds.
Mucous Membranes	Moist, pale pink (healthy)	Lift the upper lip to check gums. Color changes (pale, red, gray, yellow) can indicate health issues.
Water Intake	Minimum 5 gallons per day	Increased water intake in hot weather or with strenuous exercise.