



# 10

## DANGEROUS *Pregnancy* PROBLEMS

Facing Both Your Mare  
& Her Unborn Foal

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*presented by*



HORSE MOMS

1988



.....  
"Here I am with my girl, Penny!"

*Find us online!*



**FROM THE AUTHOR**

*"When you think about it, we are all part of a herd...horses and people.*

*Once you look at it that way... You'll look at yourself, your horse and other people in a very different way.*

*I believe horses and animals in general have souls. I also believe that our horses count on us to take care of them and to love them. And I believe if you care for them right... they'll love you right back.*

*For people that truly love their horses."*

*-Mary*

*At HorseMoms.com, We Help Keep Your Horse Healthy For Life*



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#### DISCLAIMER

Although every effort has been made to present scientifically correct and current information based on expert sources, readers should rely solely on their own veterinarians and equine health professionals to diagnose and treat their animals, as well as formulate a plan for breeding.

Readers should be aware that all results are dependent on a variety of factors, none of which are under the control of the authors or us. Therefore, neither the authors or us make any claim or warranty with respect to results that may be obtained from any procedures described herein.

While product and or drug brand names have occasionally been used, it has been for illustrative purposes only and in no way constitutes an endorsement of that product or in any inference that similar products are in any way inferior.

Before using any product or drug consult with your veterinarian and follow the manufacturer's directions carefully,

Handling and breeding horses are inherently dangerous activities. Therefore neither the authors or Us assume responsibility for any accident or injury resulting from a readers interaction with horses.



*It's a magical time...*  
**SHE'S COUNTING ON YOU  
TO TAKE CARE OF HER &  
HER UNBORN FOAL.**

Not every pregnancy is easy or without complications and it's important we know how to address all these issues.

*We need to take the best care of our  
pregnant girl and her baby.*

We need to know what they are and how to take the right next steps to be able to help or even prevent bad situations from happening.



# 10 DANGEROUS *Problems* *In Pregnant Mares*





# 1

## SPONTANEOUS ABORTION

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**Sadly mares can suddenly abort their babies for a variety of different reasons.**

Some say the sudden abortion is nature's way of helping to keep the breed healthy.

I can certainly understand that.

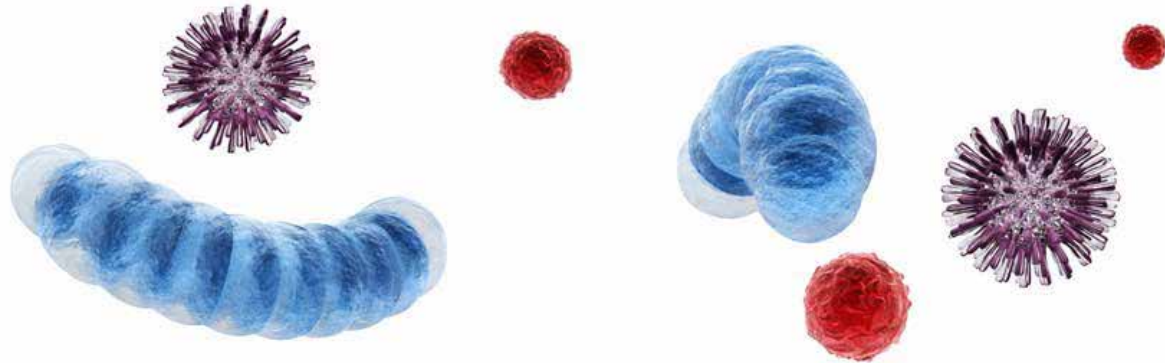
**But if the reasons can be understood and corrected shouldn't we try?**

As a mom, wouldn't you want to give your baby the best chance at a healthier lifestyle?

## 2 MAJOR REASONS FOR *Spontaneous Abortion*

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### 1. The Equine Herpes Virus (EHV) / Respiratory Rhinovirus

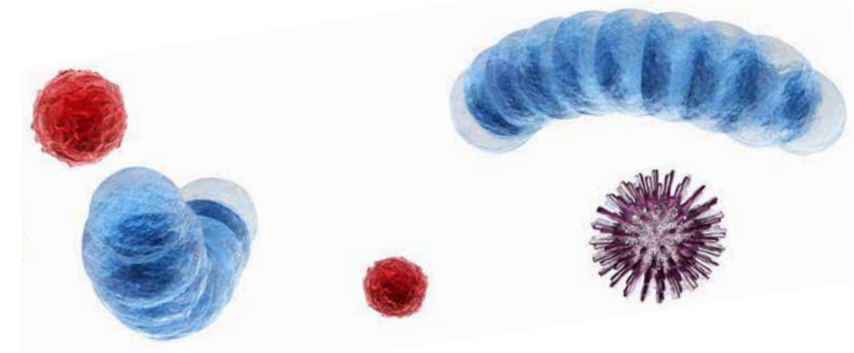


These viruses can **easily spread** to your mare simply by your mare **breathing the air**, similar to how humans contact colds and viruses.

**Be extra cautious. The virus can survive up to 42 days.**

If you happen to be in an area with other horses that have the virus, **it can attach itself to your clothing** and be transmitted by you to your mare.

I'd feel horrible if that happened and I was the reason she lost her baby or if I lost her...



What's worse? Your girl can have the virus and still show no symptoms. Unfortunately as she fights off the virus, the virus ends up in her white blood cells and those cells (carrying the virus) can infect her baby.

#### **The Preventative Measure:**

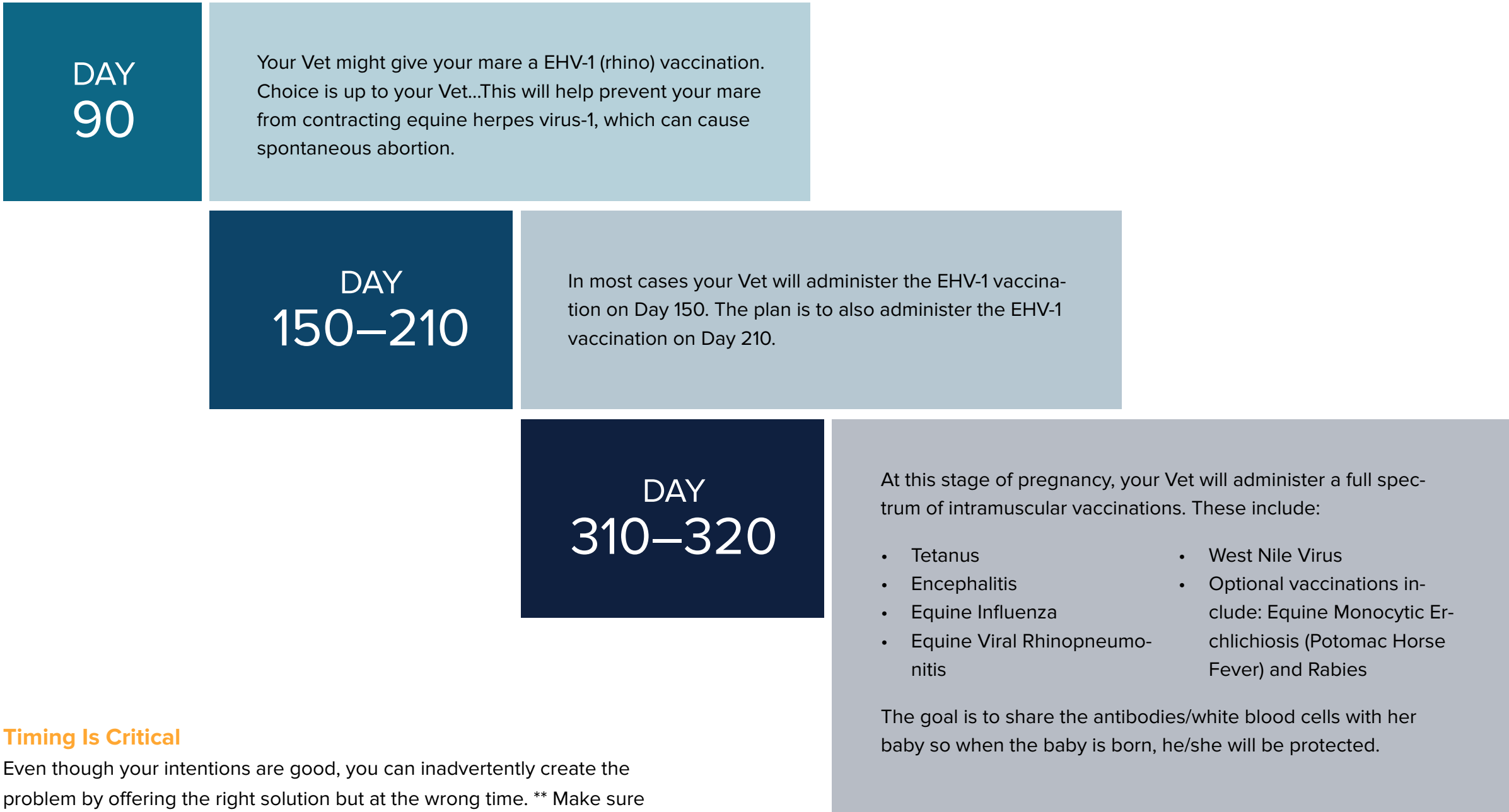
*Have your girl on a vaccine schedule to reduce the chances of the virus taking hold of her.*

Please make sure to vaccinate immediately before breeding your girl and not again 'til mid pregnancy.

This is critical since the live vaccine may be active enough to transfer to her growing baby and be the cause of an abortion.



# VACCINE SCHEDULE



### Timing Is Critical

Even though your intentions are good, you can inadvertently create the problem by offering the right solution but at the wrong time. \*\* Make sure to connect with your vet for the right vaccination at the right time to make sure it is effective and does no harm.



## 2 MAJOR REASONS FOR *Spontaneous Abortion*

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### 2. Poor Vulvar Confirmation & The Potential Infections That Can Develop From It



A mares vulva changes as she ages so older mares are **more susceptible to poor vulvar confirmation.**

Your mares private parts help protect her reproductive system (especially the placenta) from foreign matter getting inside her and causing an infection that can be dangerous to both her and her baby.

It should be airtight and vertical.

If it is angled or tipped one way or the other, every time she moves, air and the contaminants that it carries can be pulled into her body. It's as if the doorway is partially opened and it must be tightly sealed.

#### The Preventative Measure:

*Surgically correcting the problem through a procedure called Caslicks surgery*

Essentially your vet does some plastic surgery. A few nips here, a few tucks there and the problem is corrected in the short term.

# 2

## COLIC

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**Unfortunately, pregnant mares have a greater chance of colicing given what their bodies are going through.**

This is especially dangerous in mares that have a history of colicing or consistently crib.

Once the mare begins to excessively roll to help relieve her discomfort, it will all stress her unborn baby.

**Colic can lead to toxins that are created and discharged into her bloodstream.** This flood of toxins only increases the chances of complications for both your baby and hers too.

The challenge is to **recognize when you your girl is colicing** or if she's only a bit uncomfortable due to her pregnancy.



### The Preventative Measure:

*Follow your girls normal deworming routine for the first 300 days to prevent colic caused by tissue damage by worm larvae.*

Make sure she **eats, drinks and passes manure regularly.**

Keep her from cribbing and windsucking. Make any changes to her feed gradually.

Feed small quantities at frequent intervals on a regular schedule, **especially if your mare has a history of colic.**

**Be sure to keep a closer eye on her. A [wellness plan](#) may help.**





# 3

## FESCUS TOXICOSIS

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Fescue is a pretty hardy grass and is one of the more common grasses you'll find in pastures.

As it grows and gets tall, it has a greater chance of having a fungus attach itself to the fescue.

This fungus is called **Acremonium Coenopialum** and it can infect your girl and cause her to abort or to hold her pregnancy for too long (**up to 13 months instead of the 11 months**) and damage or kill the foal.

**Her placenta becomes very thick** and rather than breaking during birth, the entire placenta and foal are pushed through the birth canal together.

It's virtually impossible to do this without serious immediate or long term problems or death for both mare and foal.

### The Preventative Measure:

*Test the pasture & feed for fescue and fungus. Testing can be done at your local AG department.*

### Testing Sources:

- 👉 [Endophyte Testing Service](#)
- 👉 [Tall Fescue Endophyte Submission](#)

### How To Sample:

- 👉 [PDF: Sampling Tall Fescue Endophyte in Pasture or Hay Stands](#)

Your soon to be mom is most susceptible to this in the first and last 30 days of her pregnancy. So take special care during these times.

One symptom is a mammary gland developing before it should. Normally a mammary gland becomes noticeable on or slightly before her 11 month.

# 4

## INTERNAL INJURY

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### Horses are horses.

That means they can bump, kick, and push each other **(sometimes pretty seriously)**.

They also can get **spooked** and run into or through all sorts of obstacles that may happen to be in their way.

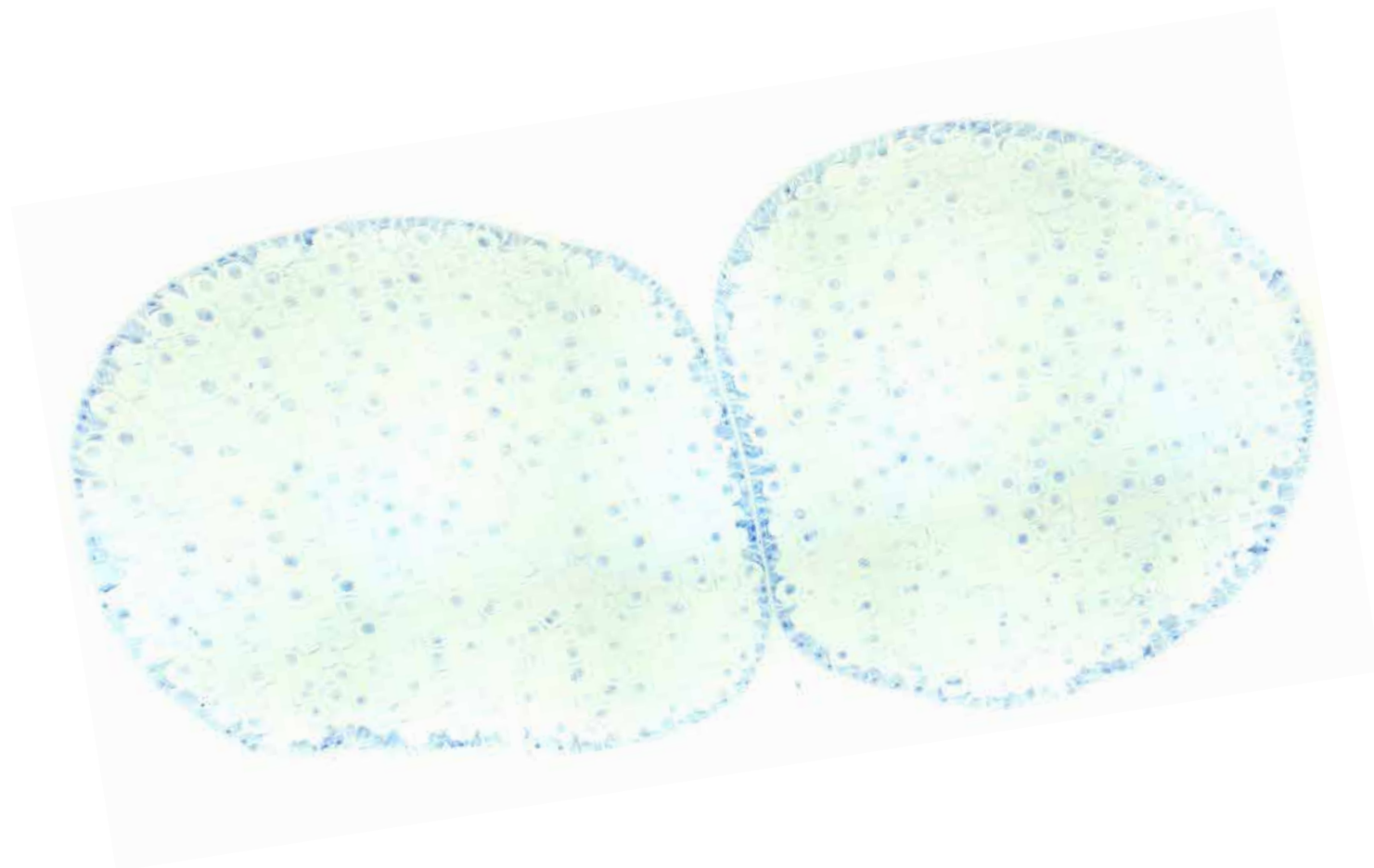
**We all know or have first hand experience on what can happen when you have a horse.** Some “jostling” earlier in her pregnancy may not create the same potential problems that your mare and her foal would experience in the later term of her pregnancy.



That also means as she gets deeper into her pregnancy, don't push her too hard in any type of exercise. Like most injuries, any injury causes stress in addition to the outward physical damage you can see.

### The Preventative Measure:

*As her due date inches closer, the chances her and her baby being hurt or worse start increase dramatically.*



# 5

## EQUINE PROTOZOAL MYELOENCEPHALITIS (EPM)

This parasite, called **Sarcocystis Falcatula**, is dangerous for horses regardless if your mare's pregnant or not.

### The Preventative Measure:

*Pick up her uneaten feed so it doesn't sit in the pasture overnight.*

 [Feeding and Buying Good Hay For Your Horse](#)

**Keep the hay off the ground (we use chinch chix).** Prior to feeding in her stall, pick up all the old uneaten hay and feed.

This parasite is originally found in other animals feces (like possums) and when it gets mixed in your horses food and eaten by your horse, the bug is passed on to your horse.

**Unfortunately your girl can pick up and be infected by EPM at any time.** You could see weight loss, coordination problems even paralysis.



# 6

## LAMINITIS

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This is a common problem with horses in general. Mares that have had problems with laminitis in the past are especially susceptible during their pregnancy.

**The Preventative Measure:**  
*Make sure feed is low energy & no carbs*

If your girl has laminitis during her pregnancy, we suggest you **DO NOT** use Bute. Use Banamine as a safer substitution. The reason is **Bute can affect the foals heart** causing problems with lack of oxygen.

**YES Banamine – NO Bute!**

 [See a laminitis story.](#)



# 7

## MALNUTRITION

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Regardless of where in the pregnancy your girl is, even pre-pregnancy, **nutrition is critical** to the health and well-being of both Mom and baby.

**Malnutrition of the pregnant mare during pregnancy can have profound long lasting effects in the foal:**

- Decreased foal growth rate
- Decreased bone growth
- Risk of bone & joint diseases
- Decreased brain development
- Risk of diarrhea
- Increased incidence of disease
- Decreasing survivability

👉 [Feeding more may not solve the problem.](#)

During pregnancy your girl will certainly need more nutrition but she'll also need different nutrition and in some cases in different proportions.

**This is a tricky time.**

Overdoing her menu while you try to cover all the nutritional bases will backfire. Poor nutrition can **cascade into a mal-nourished mare** and that can create a multitude of problems from deformed or dead babies to putting your girls life in danger.

**The Preventative Measure:**

*The right amounts of the right ingredients at the right time based on her specific life stage per the National Research Council for Equines (NRC)*

**Poor nutrition works both ways:**

Not enough can be as bad as feeding too much are both no good. In fact, too much or not enough of the right nutrition in the right amounts can actually create another potential pregnancy problem.

# 8 OBESITY

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**Being pregnant is not an excuse to eat like a horse right? Well that cliché has never been more true for horses too.**

Being a pregnant horse and being overweight comes with its challenges – **it could lead to laminitis**, the pelvic fat pads could enlarge and her baby will have less room to squeeze through the birth canal.

This could mean that **the foal may go without oxygen for long periods of time**, could potentially **get stuck during birth** or even be **hurt, injured or otherwise damaged during the birth**.

**Just because a mare becomes pregnant doesn't give you carte blanche to start feeding for two.** The baby doesn't start gaining weight until they end of the 2nd trimester.



## The Preventative Measure:

*During the early period of pregnancy, it is much more about the quality, the type and the combination of nutrients than it is in purely the volume of food your girl needs*

Ultimately an overweight mare will have problems with delivery and put herself and her baby at risk.



# 9

## TWINNING

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Horses do a wonderful job at delivering one baby per pregnancy.

But once you start multiplying that number you stand a greater chance of problems.

**Multiple births almost never develop into healthy babies.**

The odds are stacked against a good healthy result for those babies. If the babies live, neither one is totally healthy.

Regardless, the best, healthiest, and strongest births are singles rather than twins (or triplets for that matter).

### ! What Are The Odds?

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Thoroughbreds twin 25% – 30% of the time while a quarter horse is in the 15% – 20% range.

### The Preventative Measure:

*Your Vet can check on your girl to see if she is carrying twins as early as 14-15 days into her pregnancy (more awareness is important).*



# 10.

## UTERINE ARTERY RUPTURES

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It's just like it sounds. The artery in the uterus that supplies the blood from the mom to the baby **bursts**.

As the mare ages, the artery **loses elasticity**. If the artery bursts, the mare may bleed out. These situations are often fatal for the mare and her baby.

### The Preventative Measure:

*Your girl needs to be checked by your Vet at regularly scheduled intervals based on fetal development.*

#### For example:

Day 1–100, Day 101–200, Day 201–300, Day 300 to term.

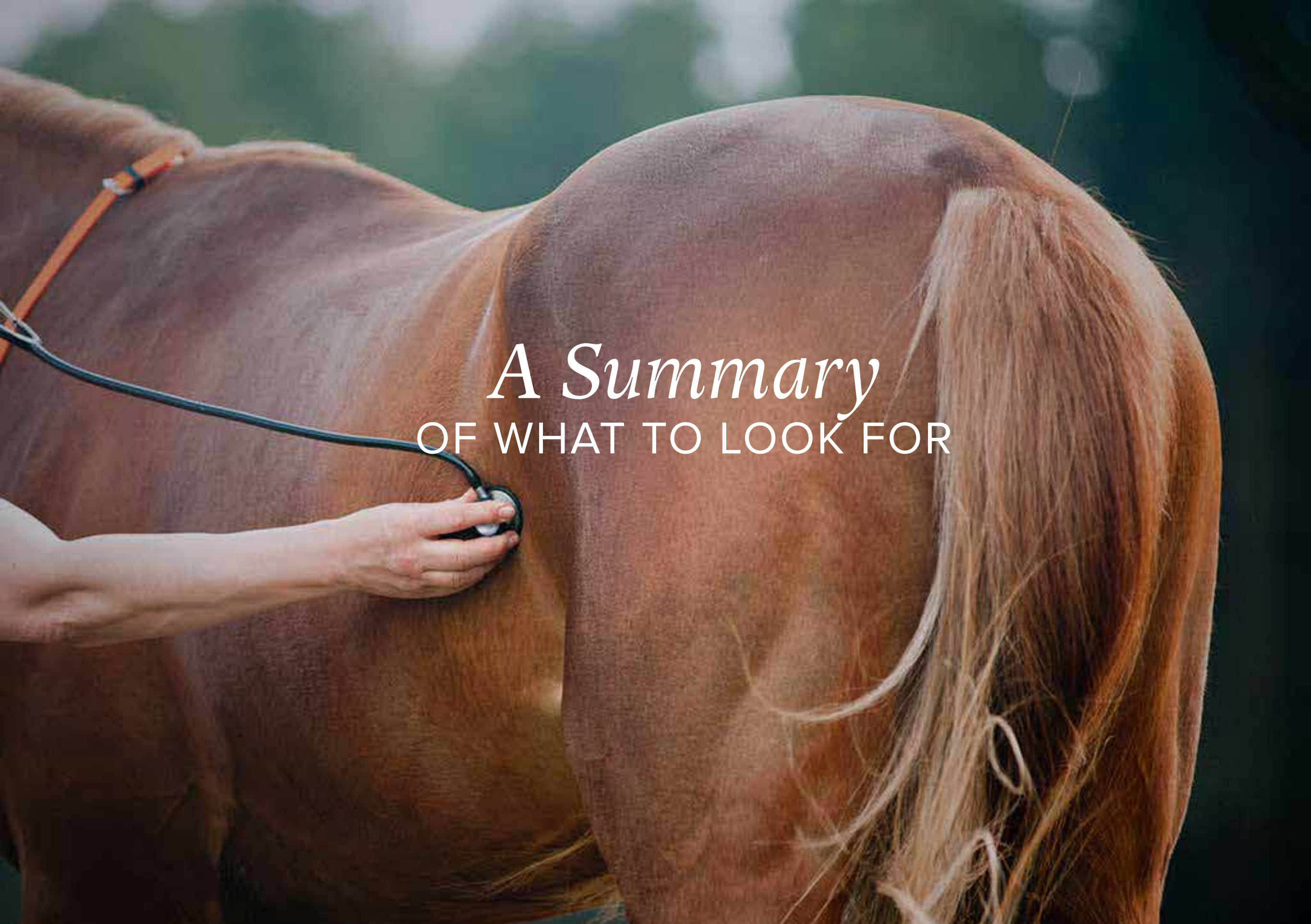
### Older Mares At Risk

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Uterine artery ruptures are more common in older mares over the age of **16 years**. Unfortunately the risk *increases again* at **18 years old** and when mares are **20 or over**, it's considered a **HIGH risk**.







*A Summary*  
OF WHAT TO LOOK FOR



# 1. SPONTANEOUS ABORTION

## Due to EHV Virus

- Look for prematurely developed mammary glands (prior to month 11) and showing abdominal discomfort
- Follow the appropriate vaccination schedule before and after conceiving (speak with your vet).

### Vaccine Schedule:

- **Day 90** Your Vet might give your mare a EHV-1 (rhino) vaccination. Choice is up to your Vet...This will help prevent your mare from contracting equine herpesvirus-1 which can cause spontaneous abortion.
- In most cases your Vet will administer the EHV-1 vaccination on **Day 150**
- The plan is to also administer the EHV-1 vaccination on **Day 210**.
- Between **Day 310 – 320**, your Vet will give a full spectrum of intramuscular vaccinations. These include tetanus, encephalitis (also known as sleeping sickness; depending what part of the country you are in, this vaccination will include the Western Equine, Eastern Equine, and/or Venezuelan equine varieties), equine influenza, equine viral rhinopneumonitis, and west nile virus; optional vaccinations include: equine monocytic ehrlichiosis (Potomac horse fever) and rabies.
- The goal is to share the antibodies/white blood cells with her baby so when the baby is born he/she will be protected.

- **Caution:** A live vaccine immunity less up to six months and should only be given to open mares.
- **Caution:** If you vaccinate immediately before breeding or mare you may not administer another vaccine until mid pregnancy.

## Due To Poor Vulvar Confirmation

- Check to see if the vulva is tipped severely or above the brim of the pelvis you risk air coming in.
- **Caution:** If the placenta becomes contaminated it can cause abortion or in the late-term can even cause babies to be weak at birth.
- **Caution:** best to have your mares genitalia evaluated by your vet. If there's a problem the structure can be corrected with Caslicks surgery, it's a procedure with that will stitch your mares vulva.

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# 2. COLIC

- Make sure your mare eats regularly, drinks, and passes manure.
- **Caution:** If your mare kicks at her belly her attempts to buy barrel, keep watch and call your vet.
- **Caution:** Cribbing increases the likelihood of recurrent colic (prevent cribbing)
- **Caution:** If your mare appears comfortable & refuses feed, call your vet.



### 3. FESCUS TOXICOSIS

- **Caution:** for mares been infected fescue grass or hay during her first trimester she may abort a pregnancy or have trouble conceiving
- For mares been infected fescue grass or hay during her last 30 days the pregnancy may go on longer than normal and become dangerous. Prolactin diminishes, mammary glands develop, and the placenta thickens, affecting the babys development.
- If your mare doesn't conceive at the start of breeding season, have your hay and pastures checked for infected fescue.
- If you're pregnant mares progressing well, keep an eye out for developing mammary glands before month 11
- **Caution:** not sure what type of grass you have a pasture contact your local county extension office if you have fescue and have it tested to see if the fungus is on the grass.
- Make sure mares away from the fescue source during her first and final months

### 4 INTERNAL INJURY

- **Caution:** the growing baby is well protected from the outside but shock affect the baby as much is your mare. If your mares are stressed, her baby may also be stressed.
- Carefully choose your pregnant mares pasture companions.

- Make sure that the other horses are not too aggressive. Stress can cause were problems than visible injuries.
- Mares close to term consider moving her to a little place where she can relax away from the challenges of other horses.
- Exercising her last month, make it easy and slow, the last thing you want to happen is for your girl to fall.

### 5. EQUINE PROTOZOAL MYELOENCEPHALITIS (EPM)

- **Caution:** Stress can bring on symptoms at anytime during pregnancy or delivery
- **Caution:** Get EPM at anytime during your pregnancy
- EPM presents different symptoms in horses.
- Watch for sudden stumbles, next weight loss, and lameness
- **Caution:** If you notice EPM symptoms, contact your vet immediately. New medications can improve your mares chance to stopping the protozoan's advancement.



## 6. LAMINITIS

- **Caution:** Even mares never had a problem before can founder
- **Caution:** if your girl retains the placenta after full delivery, toxins may enter her bloodstream and impact her feet
- Check daily. Make sure she standing correctly, and placed her hand on her feet check for heat.
- **Caution:** Work with your vet to place a limit mayor and a diet rich in forage, but lacking energy pumping grains
- **Caution:** treat with nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory like Banamine. Do not use bute since it can harm the foal
- **Caution:** After birth your mare should pass the placenta within three hours or less. Longer or if she appears lethargic, ask your vet to give her a hormone to help with muscle contractions to push the placenta completely out of her body.

## 7. MALNUTRITION

- **Caution:** Without even nutrients, her body searches for nutrients whenever possible.
- **Caution:** If you're having trouble keeping weight on the mare consult your veterinarian to discuss feeding strategies
- Feed the right nutrition in the right amounts at the right time.

## 8. OBESITY

- Monitor your horses weight throughout pregnancy
- Mares usually need an extra boost of nutrition and calories during last trimester.
- Check your mares body condition regularly (use the XX chart found here)

## 9. TWINNING

- Ask your Vet keep an eye out for twins and triplets as early as 14 to 15 days into the pregnancy.
- **Caution:** While there's no external sign to signify twins, your mares breed may determine the likelihood that she will have twins. The statistics are: on average 25% – 35% of thoroughbred mares ovulate multiple eggs, while quarter horses will ovulate multiple eggs 15% –20% of the time.





## 10. UTERINE ARTERY RUPTURES

- **Caution:** Aging mares are heightened risk for uterine artery ruptures
- **Caution:** Mares age 16 and over are at risk. When mares reach 18, their risk increases again. Mares in their 20s are at highest risk.
- **Caution:** If your aged mare shows unusual behavior and signs after delivery, tie her so that she can't lie down. This may help confine the blood and not allow it to get to her abdomen. You may buy some time till the Vet arrives to help.



# HORSE MOMS RECOMMENDATION



Here's a special HorseMoms coupon code that'll get you an **extra 15% off** your first Preggers order (after all we horsemoms have to stick together).

Coupon Code : **horsemoms**

## Preggers

by Animal Kingdom Organics

**Preggers** is the perfect combination of organic supplements designed to meet the nutrient needs of pregnant mares & their unborn foals.

The formula is packed with **tonic herbs** – they improve general health by balancing and sustaining energy flow and focus in the body.

**Tonic herbs** should be used regularly to be the most helpful, especially during pregnancy; a **tonic** is to the **cells** much like **exercise** is to the **muscles**: not much use when done erratically.

Check out Animal Kingdom Organics [here!](#)