

# POST-OPERATIVE SURGICAL COLIC CARE

## Care

- ✚ Take and record a rectal temperature at least once daily for 14 days. Consult with your veterinarian if the temperature is greater than 101°F.
- ✚ Examine the abdominal incision once daily for 30 days by visual inspection as palpation can be dangerous and not very informative.
  - Check for moisture, a fluid/discharge, or swelling. Some swelling (edema) on the abdomen is normal and will be present until healing is complete.
  - Moisture, discharge, excessive swelling, gaps in the incision, or exposure of raw tissue is abnormal and your referring veterinarian should be consulted.
- ✚ Closely observe for signs of colic and founder/laminitis.
- ✚ Banamine (flunixin meglumine) may be given by your veterinarian in the vein if needed. It should never be given in the muscle.
- ✚ If questions, concerns, or complications develop, contact your referring veterinarian.

## Feeding

- ✚ If grain is fed, reintroduce slowly after 30 days. Grain is not recommended during the early postoperative recovery.
- ✚ Examine the manure daily. Note the quantity of manure and the characteristics. A diet which has a laxative effect is recommended (grass, alfalfa hay).
- ✚ Consult with your referring veterinarian should the horse go off its feed.

## Deworming

- ✚ Work out a deworming program with your veterinarian. Current guidelines for parasite control are much different than previous recommendations because of worm resistance to drugs.

## Exercise

- ✚ **First 30 days:** Stall rest with hand walking the first 30 days after surgery. Hand walking, 10 minutes per walk, and hand grazing if grass is available, is recommended 3 to 4 times daily.
- ✚ **30 to 60 days:** Round pen or small paddock self-exercise is permissible from day 30 to day 60 after surgery if the incision is healing well. If a round pen or small paddock is not available, increase the time hand walking.
- ✚ **60 to 90 days:** Gradually return to normal activity from day 60 to day 90 after surgery. If postoperative complications occurred, especially in the incision, additional rest is recommended.

## Follow-up care

- ✚ Have your veterinarian check the horse at 30, 60 and 90 days to ensure that the horse is ready for turnout or normal activity. Skin sutures are absorbable and do not need to be removed.