



COLIC REMEDIES

Aconitum napellus - very beneficial when used at the onset of any disturbance, colic included. It works best in the very early stages of acute presentations. Aconite symptoms (any and all, including colic, nasal discharge, earaches, lameness) are sudden, and often occur after a change in the weather - a cold snap, a front moving through, or windy weather. The horse is often very fearful with a full, hard, rapid pulse and a restless, anxious demeanor, and may have a sudden, high fever. He is usually sweating and thirsty.

Nux vomica - for the very irritable horse with a fiery temperament, overly sensitive to noise, light and other stimulus; jumpy, twitchy, angry, resentful, does not want to be touched. Intestinal rumblings and gurglings can be heard. The horse walks slowly and may want to press his head against something. Nux is an excellent initial remedy to use when restlessness, indigestion, or bloating occur, especially from ingestion of inappropriate foods or from overeating. Nux is for excess - excess food, also excess in the symptoms - excessively sensitive. It's a good remedy for exposure to toxins that results in spasms and sensitivities. It is also excellent when constipation is part of the picture. Nux helps with ineffectual urging, excess straining to pass a stool, or straining with no stool. It has a very beneficial effect on the digestive system and is worthy of consideration in many digestive disturbances.

Colchicum - the Colchicum picture is a very gassy, noisy colic. The abdomen is distended and rumbling of the bowels is easily heard; the horse generally prefers to stand still and may be unable to stretch out his legs. He may kick up at his belly with his hind feet. The pulse is weak and thready; there may be great exhaustion. The colic may be caused by too much grass or other greens.

Colocynthis - is an excellent remedy when the colic presents itself with much spasm. The pains may come and go, often in episodes. The Colocynthis colic is a quieter, less rumbly, gassy colic. The abdomen is usually tight and distended. Bending double relieves; the horse may try to achieve this posture as best he can - he may even get in a sitting position to compress the abdomen because the pressure on the abdomen brings relief. The horse is often agitated and feels better when moving about. He may roll and arch his back, or grind his teeth.

Magnesia phosphorica - the Mag phos colic presents with involuntary twitching and spasms - of the eyelids, muscles, and extremities as well as that of the gastrointestinal tract which is shown by the spasmodic and sudden cramping. The horse may be pawing and kicking at his abdomen and there may be bloating. Bending double and pressure on the abdomen relieve discomfort. Walking about also relieves discomfort because gas is expelled while walking; the gas expulsion is more relieving than the walking.

Belladonna - With the Belladonna colic there is a full bounding pulse, hot skin, sweating, dilated pupils, delirium and excitability. There is increased sensitivity to noise, motion, and light, and touch; the abdomen may be extremely tender and sensitive to touch. In contrast to Nux, Belladonna patients usually appear to be hotter, are usually thirstless, more wide-eyed, not as irritable but perhaps more violent. Horses in a Belladonna state tend to have dry mouths, tacky mucosal membranes, and may have sticky, thick saliva. They often have elevated rectal temperatures.

Arsenicum album - useful for the colicky horse that is restless and anxious (mental restlessness as well as physical restlessness). The horse gets up and down and frequently changes positions. If the horse is in an advanced Arsenicum state he may be weak and down, but still making little movements of the limbs and head. It may be a middle-of-the-night colic, because Arsenicum symptoms are generally worse from eleven PM to three AM. The colic is often sudden. The horse drinks water, but in frequent small sips. There may be watery diarrhea, dark and somewhat bloody - usually a darker, more fermented type of blood. The smell is cadaverous - like something dead and decaying (a rare smell for an herbivore). Arsenicum also has a real periodicity to it - the colic often happens every two weeks.

Carbo vegetabilis - the remedy for the horse that is down and in a state of extreme weakness, collapse or shock. The Carbo veg colic is gassy and could be caused from overeating; the surface of the body feels cold; the skin and mucus membranes of the mouth and rectal/vaginal areas may appear bluish. Breathing is shallow. This remedy is nicknamed "the corpse reviver". Often the horse is nonresponsive - to touch, to sounds, to other stimulus. The corneal reflex may be absent. Carbo veg is often indicated in colics from overeating and excesses, but in contrast to the Nux excess, the Carbo veg colic is a state of depletion and collapse rather than the active and excessive reactions of Nux. If the Carbo veg rescues the horse from the collapse, another remedy may be needed as the symptom picture unfolds.