

Know Your Horse's Normal

Vital signs baseline card — record what is normal for your horse, on a day when nothing is wrong.

Take these on a quiet day, at rest, in the shade. Not after a ride, and not when you are already worried about him. That reading is your reference point for every day that follows.

YOUR HORSE

Name _____

Age _____

THE NUMBERS

Vital sign	Normal range at rest	Call your vet when	MY HORSE
Temperature	99 to 101.5 F	101.5 to 102.5 is mild. Call at 103 or above.	_____
Pulse	28 to 44 beats per minute	Over 60 at rest is a problem.	_____
Respiration	8 to 16 breaths per minute	Elevated at rest, or laboured.	_____
Gut sounds	Gurgling in all four quadrants	Silent or greatly reduced.	_____
Capillary refill	2 seconds or less	Over 2 seconds, or pale gums.	_____
Mucous membranes	Pink and moist	Pale, white, grey, blue, or tacky.	_____

DATE TAKEN

Baseline recorded on _____

Rechecked on _____

HOW TO TAKE THEM

Pulse: the digital artery along the pastern, or at the jaw. Respiration: watch the flank rise and fall for 30 seconds and double it. Gut sounds: listen against the flank on both sides, high and low. Capillary refill: press the gum firmly for two seconds, release, and count how long the colour takes to return.

101.2 means one thing on a horse who runs 99.8, and something else on a horse who has always sat at 101.