

# HEAT STRESS:

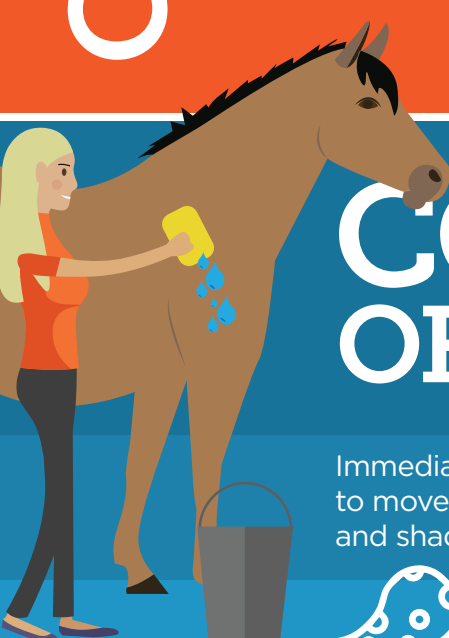
## HOW TO KEEP YOUR HORSE COOL THIS SUMMER

Summers can be just as stressful for your horse as they are for you. High temperature and humidity levels can result in heat strokes and dehydration. Here's all you need to know about keeping your horse cool in the summer heat.

### CAUSE

Horses generate a lot of metabolic heat which dissipates through their muscles. Sweating is their natural cooling mechanism.

This cooling becomes less efficient in summer due to high heat and humidity levels. The more they sweat, the more nutrients and fluids their systems lose. This can result in heat strokes and dehydration.



### COURSE OF ACTION

Immediately call a vet and try to move your horse to a cool and shady place.

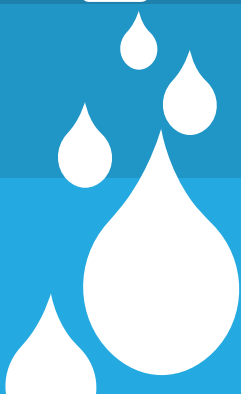
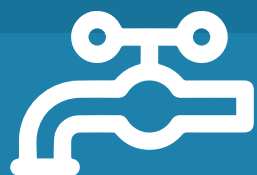


Make sure to provide water and electrolytes for them to drink.



You can give them a bath with cold water, but make sure to start with their feet and legs. Then work your way up slowly. Sponge baths are another good cooling option.

If it's extremely hot, use a 50/50 solution of water and rubbing alcohol to aid with cooling. The rubbing alcohol evaporates quicker than water which will help with evaporative cooling, be cautious though because the alcohol dries skin. It also helps to bathe underneath a horse's neck, under their belly, and inside the back legs.



### DIAGNOSIS



If your horse is showing one or more of the symptoms below, then they may be suffering from heat stress. You should consider contacting your vet right away.

- ☒ Profuse sweating
- ☐ Lack of sweating
- ☐ Lethargy
- ☐ High rectal temperature
- ☐ Rapid heart and respiratory rates
- ☐ Slow capillary refill time
- ☒ Dry and hot skin
- ☐ Muscle tremor
- ☒ Dark mucous membranes
- ☐ Dark urine

## PREVENTIVE MEASURES

### WORK SCHEDULE

Avoid the summer blues by changing your turnout schedule. Go on early morning or evening rides. Rest them inside during the day. This will keep both lethargy and exhaustion at bay.



### HOSING DOWN

Keep them cool by hosing them down with cold water. Take them for a short swim or a quick trot through water. It also helps cool them down faster after a routine morning exercise. When hosing them down, make sure to start at their feet and legs. Then slowly make your way up their body while scraping excess water off.



### ELECTROLYTES

Ensure they remain well hydrated with an ample supply of cool drinking water and plenty of electrolytes. Electrolytes will replenish any fluids lost from their system due to excess sweating.



### HIGH-FAT DIET

Put them on a high-fat diet as opposed to a protein diet. They'll generate less metabolic heat using fat as an energy source as compared to using carbohydrates as an energy source. With less heat to dissipate, they'll be less likely to suffer heat stress.



### SHADE & SHELTER

Make sure to provide a nice shady shelter for your horse to retreat to out of the sun. They will moderate their time in the sun as long as they have access to a covered shady area for them to take shelter under. If in a barn, you can also provide fans to help increase the airflow in their stalls. Your horses work hard for you and should have a comforting place to return to after work.

