



TAKING A HORSE'S TEMPERATURE

1. Temperature is taken rectally in horses, using a digital or mercury thermometer.
2. If using a digital thermometer, turn it on and check the display is working. With a mercury thermometer the temperature needs to be lowered and this is done by shaking the thermometer (taking care not to drop it!).
3. Add lubricant to the bulb end of the thermometer.
4. Ask a helper to hold the horse for you.
5. The operator should stand at the side of the horse, near the hindquarters to decrease the risk of being kicked.
6. Take hold of the tail and pull gently towards the side of the hindquarters. Gently insert the bulb of the thermometer into the anal sphincter. It is not necessary to insert the whole thermometer, just the narrowed section (approximately 3-4cm).
7. As the thermometer is inserted, angle it to one side so that the bulb rests against the mucous membrane and doesn't end up hitting a ball of faeces which will be colder.
8. Keep hold of the thermometer for at least 30 seconds or until the digital thermometer beeps to indicate it is ready to be removed. Never let go of the thermometer as it can disappear. With the help of the handler continue to reassure the horse.
9. Withdraw the thermometer and check the reading.
10. Ensure the thermometer is cleaned and disinfected ready for future use.



Taking the horse's temperature

Safety is paramount at all times. Some horses may be resentful of the use of a rectal thermometer. A hard hat should be worn and you must take care to stay out of range of the horse's hind legs. If you do not feel comfortable to take your horse's temperature you should ask someone more experienced or your veterinary surgeon.

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