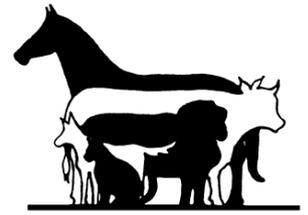


# Main Ridge Veterinary Clinic



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## Chronic Diarrhoea

### What is diarrhoea

Diarrhoea is a common condition that we see in all animals, including horses and ponies. It is the production of profuse/loose/watery faeces, and at a physiological level is typically a result of excessive secretions into, or inadequate absorption from, the gastro-intestinal tract (usually the large intestine). We can classify it into two basic categories; acute (sudden onset) and chronic (on-going or longer term).

### Clinical signs/symptoms

As a general rule, chronic diarrhoea alone does not usually involve an elevated temperature or blood in the faeces (both of which can be very dangerous indicators), however this is **not** always the case! The mucus membranes **usually** look “normal” and the animal **usually** has a good appetite. One of the most common other symptoms (apart from the diarrhoea) is weight loss. It is not uncommon for a horse or pony to show signs of lethargy or looking “off” in the coat.

### Causes:

The cause(s) of chronic diarrhoea in the horse are varied and many. They include, but are not limited to:

- Diet or dietary changes
- Parasites such as gastro-intestinal worms
- Ingested and/or retained sand
- Infective causes (bacterial/viral/protozoal)
- Inflammatory Bowel Syndrome/Disease
- Gastric ulcers
- Lymphoma
- Allergies
- Antibiotic treatments
- Other underlying systemic conditions

### Treatments

Treatment of chronic diarrhoea usually involves a process of elimination, whereby we rule out or treat for specific potential causes, and then use symptomatic non-specific treatment for the diarrhoea. Some further testing or diagnostics may also be undertaken, and may include but are not limited to blood tests, faecal tests, endoscope, ultrasound or gastro-intestinal biopsy.

Symptomatic treatments can involve:

- Gastro-intestinal protective or binding/absorptive agents
- Anti-endotoxic treatments

- Products to help normalise gastric motility
- Probiotics
- Dietary changes
- Fluid therapy

Sometimes treatments for chronic diarrhoea can result in rapid improvement in your horse/pony's condition, however sometimes diagnosis and treatments may be prolonged and ongoing.

If at any time you are worried about your horse/pony's condition, or if you have any further questions, please contact the Main Ridge Veterinary Clinic on (03) 5989 6232.