



10261 Co Rd P38A ~ OMAHA, NE 68142
PHONE: 402-533-1151 ~ FAX: 402-533-1159
Email: NEVCStaff@gmail.com
Michael J. Black D.V.M.
Michael P. Thomassen D.V.M.
Kimberly N. Conover D.V.M.

Lacerations

Lacerations can occur even when precautions have been taken to make the environment as safe as possible. Some lacerations are superficial and can be managed conservatively, while others need to be aggressively treated to minimize complications. It is important to be able to know which wounds need veterinary care.

Facial lacerations occur commonly. Lacerations involving the lips, nostrils, tongue and eyelids can bleed excessively and can be painful to the horse. Often sedation is necessary to allow exploration of the wound to determine the extent of the injury. Good blood flow and minimal tension on the wound edges, allow many facial wounds to heal well after suturing the laceration.

Lacerations on the lower legs can be serious. The lower leg has multiple joints, tendons and ligaments which can be involved in the wound. These important structures can be easily injured and present a potentially life threatening situation for the horse. Knowledge of anatomy is an important reason to have your veterinarian evaluate these injuries. A wait and see approach to identify if the horse gets better is not appropriate. Wounds in these locations often need aggressive wound care including suturing, bandaging and antibiotics to minimize infection.

Lacerations involving the trunk or core of the horse often involve not only skin but also muscle. Many of these lacerations have large flaps of skin and can be significantly deeper than they appear. Superficial abrasions and scrapes can often be found in these areas as well. If the wound is not completely through the skin, it may be able to be treated conservatively.

What should you do when you notice a fresh and bleeding laceration on your horse?
--Stay calm and move your horse to a quiet safe area to better examine the wound
--If the wound is excessively bleeding, put pressure on the area to slow the flow of blood. This can be accomplished with a clean towel and vet wrap or by just holding the towel by hand. DO NOT clean the wound with the garden hose since running water will not allow a clot to form.

--Call your veterinarian and advise them of the situation.

