

## Horse News and Views



- Foals that are at least 12 hours of age, or 6-8 hours post first suckle, should have an immunoglobulin (IgG) concentration of at least 400 mg./dl. and, preferably, 800 mg./dl.. Check with your veterinarian prior to the foaling season to see if they have access to a rapid test for IgG concentrations. Failure of passive transfer of antibodies from the colostrum increases the risk of sepsis developing. (Pierce SW. Foal care from birth to 30 days: a practitioner's perspective. AAEP Proceedings 2003; 49:13-21.)
- Occasionally, foals are born with, or develop within a few hours of birth, central nervous signs which vary from inappropriate suckle reflex, wandering, intermittent depression, and stargazing to convulsions and coma. These foals have been referred to as "barkers," "wanderers" or "convulsants," indicating the variation in their behaviour. The cause is thought to be associated with hypoxia (a lack of oxygen) at foaling. This can be related to premature separation of the placenta, prolonged delivery, or other factors that decrease oxygen and/or placental blood flow to the unborn or newborn foal. Neonatal adjustment syndrome is the term given to these cases. Treatment is symptomatic (based on the symptoms observed, e.g., diazepam for seizure control) and supportive, fluids to maintain hydration and antibiotics as needed. These foals require a high degree of care and often have to be referred to a hospital specializing in neonatal care. (Bernard WV. Jump-starting the dummy foal (Neonatal Maladjustment/Hypoxic Ischemic Encephalopathy). AAEP Proceedings 2003; 49: 8-12.)
- È The newborn foal normally has a heart rate of 60-120 beats per minute. Foals with heart rates of 60 beats per minute or less should be carefully watched. A veterinarian should be called to examine the foal as soon as possible. (Pierce SW. Foal care from birth to 30 days: a practitioner's perspective. AAEP Proceedings 2003; 49: 13-21.)

For further information contact Dr. Bob Wright (519) 846-3412 or visit our website: <http://www.gov.on.ca/omaf/english/livestock>



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