

EQUINE EMERGENCIES: EYE INJURIES AND YOUR HORSE

YOU WILL LEARN

Why horses are
prone to eye injuries

How to recognise an
eye injury

Complications of
eye injuries

DID YOU KNOW?

Eye injuries must always be considered an emergency.

As prey animals, horses require an almost 360 degree field of vision to avoid attacks from predators. To achieve this field of view, their eyes are located on each side of their head, making them extremely vulnerable to injury.

Q: **WHAT DOES A NORMAL, HEALTHY EYE LOOK LIKE?**

A horse with healthy eyes should be willing to fully open the eyelids and be able to move the globe forward, backward, up and down to watch moving objects. The globe should have a clear, glassy appearance and you should be able to see the deeper structures of the eye. The conjunctiva (lining of the eyelids) should be light pink in colour. Some horses with healthy eyes may have a small amount of clear discharge from the inside corner of the eye.



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What are the signs of eye injury?

Damage to any part of the eye is very painful for a horse. If you see your horse displaying these symptoms, you should contact your veterinarian immediately:

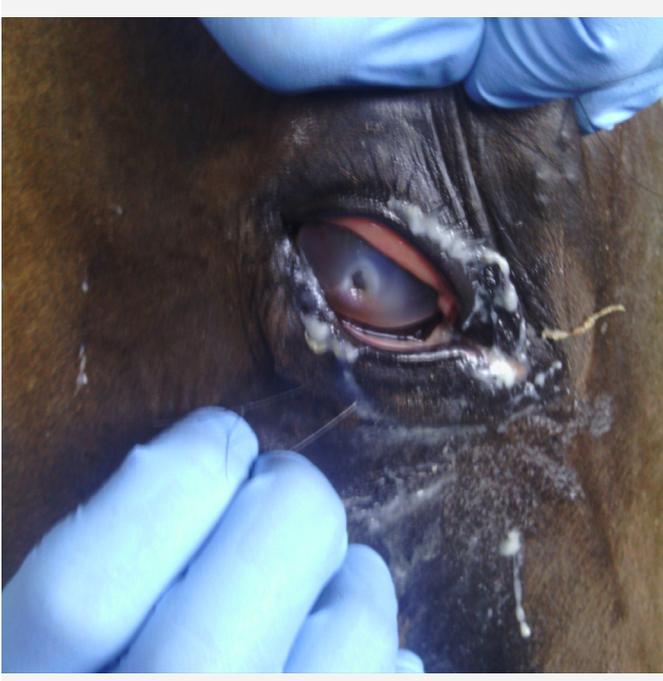
- Tightly closed eyelids
- Increased tear production
- Discolouration of the cornea or globe
- Swelling or redness of the eye
- Discharge from the eye (any colour)
- Light sensitivity

If your horse is displaying any of the above symptoms, you should contact your veterinarian immediately.



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What are the complications associated with eye injuries?

Because of the anatomy of the equine eye, penetration of medications can be a challenge, making treatment of eye injuries often prolonged and expensive. Ongoing complications, such as reduced vision, adhesions or scarring are not uncommon.

Why is an eye injury considered an emergency?

Injury to any part of the eye requires prompt and aggressive treatment. Even seemingly innocuous injuries can worsen rapidly. A simple scratch to the eye can result in a horse requiring complete removal of the eye in as little as 12 hours, so act quickly.

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DR LOUISE COSGROVE

Having spent most of her childhood in the saddle, it was a natural transition into equine veterinary medicine for Louise, founder of Exclusively Equine Veterinary Services and HorseBarn Education. A practicing equine vet, Louise is passionate about empowering horse owners, like you, with a deeper understanding of horse health, so you can give your horse a longer, healthier future.

If you have any questions regarding your horse, you're welcome to contact me personally.

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