

## Acupressure for Colic

**The vet's on the way—what more can you do? Soothe your horse with acupressure while you wait.**

*By Kara L. Stewart*

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Colic. The mere word sends shivers down horse owners' spines. Whether it's a relatively simple case of gas or a potentially deadly impaction or intestinal displacement, whenever your horse shows signs of colic, call the vet immediately.

Some of these signs are:

not eating or drinking	lying down and/or rolling more frequently than normal			
pawing the ground	kicking the belly or looking at the abdomen	standing as if to urinate, but not actually		
urinating	curling the upper lip	yawning	sweating heavily	standing quietly and/or
rigidly	reluctance to move	staggering gait or nearly falling		

Before you call the vet, make a list of any symptoms your horse is displaying. Also take your horse's temperature and heart rate, and check his mucous membrane color. Let your vet know your findings. If your vet gives you instructions to follow, proceed with them.

Beyond this, what can you do? While you're waiting for the vet to arrive, apply pressure to the following acupressure points. "Restoring the energy flow in the body can help mitigate some of your horse's discomfort," explains Nancy Zidonis, one of the three authors of *Equine Acupressure: A Working Manual* (Equine Acupressure Inc; 3rd edition; June 1999).

"We've seen excellent results when acupressure is performed on horses with colic, even if the person giving the treatment is not an experienced acupressure practitioner," adds Amy Snow, author.

To perform this acupressure point work, use the ball of your thumb or place your middle finger on top of your index finger. Apply about one to three pounds of pressure to each point. When you feel resistance in the point, let up slightly with the pressure and then apply pressure again. Exhale as you press into it, and inhale as you slowly release.

The following diagrams, from *"Equine Acupressure: A Working Manual,"* give you a general idea of where the acupoints are located. How can you be sure?

[Click Here to View the Colic-Impaction Diagram](#)  
[Click Here to View the Colic-Flatulent or Gas Diagram](#)  
[Click Here to View the Colic-Preventive Diagram](#)

"Acupoints are found in the valleys of the body—in the depressions next to or between muscles, bones, tendons and around joints," explains Marie Soderberg, author. "They're not on the top of bones or in the belly of a muscle. And, often, acupoints look and feel different than the surrounding area of the body. They feel harder or softer, warmer or cooler, and are more sensitive to touch."

Kara Stewart is a freelance writer based in Colorado.