

Doctors' Orders

Catching dental problems early can help keep your horse healthy. Horses over 5 years old should receive annual checkups; younger horses should be examined twice a year.

The following disorders can signal dental trouble and need immediate veterinary attention:

1. Dropping food while eating, difficulty chewing or excessive salivation.
2. Loss of body condition.
3. Large or undigested feed particles (long stems or whole grain) in manure.
4. Head tilting or tossing, bit chewing, tongue lolling, fighting the bit or resisting bridling.
5. Poor performance, such as lugging on the bridle, failure to turn or stop, even bucking.
6. Foul odor from mouth or nostrils, or traces of blood from the mouth.
7. Nasal discharge or swelling of the face, jaw or mouth tissues.

“Learn to Recognize Your Horse’s Dental Problems,” American Association of Equine Practitioners