

## Holiday Horse Care

**Prevent unnecessary vet bills by maintaining a routine this holiday season.**

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You're rushing to get a turkey in the oven before that houseful of guests arrive, so feeding the equine menagerie can wait just a few minutes. But hold on! The holidays are no time to break your horse care routine. Late feedings, forgetting to check waterers, rushed rides and hurried turnouts can lead to equine health problems like colic or injury. And nothing's worse than waiting for a vet to arrive on a holiday. Not only will you miss the season's festivities, you will also incur a higher than usual bill because vets typically charge more on holidays.

Here are some basic equine care tips to remember this holiday season to keep your life with horses running smoothly:

- \*Stick to your regular feed routine. Stay on schedule and don't change out feed.
- \*Horses don't need holiday indulgence. Refrain from shoveling buckets of treats into feeders. Your horses don't know it's a holiday!
- \*Make sure there is plenty of fresh, clean (unfrozen!) drinking water available. Provide extra buckets of water if you have any concerns.
- \*Don't rush turnouts. It's tempting to push a horse to run around in turnout, knowing he'll be stallbound for most of the day. But Murphy's Law dictates that hurrying a turnout leads to injury.
- \*Quick rides are fine, but make sure your horse is properly warmed up and cooled down. If you have time for just a short ride, keep it at the walk.
- \*Don't deviate from your blanketing routine.
- \*Don't leave things lying around. It's easy to become forgetful when your mind is on holiday guests, but muck rakes, wheelbarrows and feed buckets are just too tempting for curious equines.
- \*Close and lock the feed room door! Nothing says laminitis faster than horses inhaling a bin of grain.
- \*If you can't be in town for the day, arrange for caretakers to check your horses. Make sure you write out the chores you need done and provide all contact phone numbers in case of emergency.

Learn more about keeping your horse healthy in the cold with 10 Winter Health Care Mistakes to Avoid. Celebrate the holidays with HorseChannel.com e-cards.