Combatting Intestinal Parasites

*A plan for your horse.

The Enemy

Smart horse owners know the best offense against equine parasites is a strong defense based on identifying and understanding the enemies that threaten your horse's health. Check out the six worst offenders below.

Start fighting Today!

A great way to combat intestinal parasites in horses is to get educated. Learn about the types of worms horses can get, how horses get them and how to get rid of them with the information First Companion has provided on this chart.

Roundworms

Threat: High to Severe

LIFECYCLE: Mature eggs are ingested when eaten through the feces and environment; larvae migrate through intestinal wall to the liver; blood carries larvae from the liver to lungs; larvae enter airways and are coughed up into mouth; larvae are swallowed and become adults in the small intestine; adults lay up to 200,000 eggs per day; eggs are expelled in feces. Approximate 80day cycle.

SYMPTOMS: Signs of respiratory disease including nasal discharge and cough; Signs of intestinal disease including weight loss, pot belly, poor condition, digestive problems, impaction colic, bowel rupture, and death in some cases.

AFFECTS: Foals and young horses under age 2 are most vulnerable, as an infestation can severely affect both respiratory and digestive systems. Adult horses develop some immunity unless infestation is extreme and unchecked.



Encysted Small Strongyles

Threat: Moderate to Severe

LIFECYCLE: Eggs in feces; 1st & 2nd stage larvae in soil or feces; 3rd stage larvae ingested by horses from mangers, grass, feed, etc.; larvae burrow (encyst) into intestinal walls for months or even years; when large numbers of cyathostomes emerge from "hibernation" within the intestinal wall and re-enter the intestines, severe disease can occur; adults live in large intestine and produce millions of eggs expelled in feces.

SYMPTOMS: During the encysted stage the horse may have poor feed conversion and lethargy. Upon sudden emergence from encysted stage, loss of appetite, diarrhea, anemia, lethargy, colic, and even death in extreme cases can occur.

AFFECTS: All ages are vulnerable, but young horses and immunocompromised adults are most susceptible. Upon emergence, severe inflammation and bleeding in the intestine causes normal gut action to be affected, resulting in diarrhea, anemia, colic and occasionally death. Large Strongyles Threat: Moderate to Severe

LIFECYCLE: Eggs in feces; 1st & 2nd stage larvae in soil or feces; 3rd stage larvae ingested by horses from mangers, grass, feed, etc.; larvae migrate from large intestine through blood vessel walls or other organs; adults live in the large intestine and produce millions of eggs expelled in feces.

SYMPTOMS: Weight loss, digestive problems due to obstructed blood flow to portions of the large intestine, dull coat, poor appetite, lethargy, pot belly, liver problems, colic, and even death in extreme cases.

AFFECTS: Especially dangerous to young horses under age 2, and all horses if infestation is left unchecked. Migrating larvae damage blood vessels, intestinal walls, and organs such as the liver.

Pinworms Threat: Moderate

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LIFECYCLE: Eggs are laid around the anus of an infected horse; eggs fall to the ground and are ingested by other horses; eggs hatch in the stomach (occasionally other organs) and remain there until larvae are mature; larvae migrate to the large intestine and colon; adults migrate to the anus and lay eggs there before withdrawing back inside.

SYMPTOMS:

The adhesive nature of the deposited eggs is irritating and causes horses to rub their tail and rectal area to relieve the itching resulting in damage to hair and skin.

AFFECTS:

Can affect all ages. Although relatively harmless to a horse's overall health, itching from pinworms can cause damage to hair and skin.

Tapeworms Threat: Moderate

LIFECYCLE: Horse ingests a mite infected with larval tapeworm; larvae develop into adult tapeworms in the intestine in about 2 months; adult tapeworms live in intestine and absorb food as it passes by; adults produce eggs that are passed in horse feces; mites eat eggs; eggs produce larval tapeworms inside the mites in 2 to 4 months.

SYMPTOMS: Poor growth in young horses, poor condition overall, inflamed intestines, intermittent diarrhea, and/or colic.

AFFECTS: All ages are affected, as immunity isn't apparent. Young horses under age 2 may be more susceptible to problems. Heavy infestation may affect various areas of the intestinal tract, causing scarring or severe inflammation.

Bots

Threat: Low

LIFECYCLE: Bot flies (3 species) lay yellow or gray eggs on horse's hair on legs, mane, flanks, jaws, throat or lips in late summer; eggs enter the mouth when licked and hatch into larvae, remaining in the mouth up to 3 weeks; larvae migrate to stomach and small intestine and attach to the lining for about 7 months; larvae pass out in feces, enter the soil and over 2 months, develop into adult flies; adult flies lay eggs on hair on horse's legs and trunk.

SYMPTOMS: Digestive problems, dull coat, and colic.

AFFECTS: All ages can be affected. Bot larvae damage the lining of the stomach and small intestine, interfere with the passage of food, and may cause other digestive problems.



*A fecal exam is the most reliable way to be sure you're treating your horse for the right parasites. Check with your veterinarian before starting any deworming program.





The Horse

Each individual horse faces a unique parasitic challenge depending especially upon age, and then immunity level, environment, climatic region, and management practices.

FOALS: (up to 1 year): Roundworms can cause severe health problems in foals. Treat with a double dose of fenbendazole (4.6 mg/lb) at 8-12 weeks of age, then continue strategic dewormer treatments.

ADOLESCENTS: (1-2 years old): Susceptible to all parasites as immune system develops. Considered "high-shedders" that actively pass on parasites. Frequent strategic deworming recommended.

ADULT HIGH-SHEDDERS:

5-20% of horses are high-shedders and consistently shed higher numbers of strongyle eggs back into the environment. More frequent rotational deworming and fecal analysis are recommended. Broodmares: Consult your veterinarian.

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ADULT LOW-SHEDDERS: Most adults build up immunity to some parasites, have low shedding rates, and may not need to be dewormed as often.



The Compounds

Compound: Moxidectin



The Plan

Once parasite enemies are known and understood, the right deworming program can be planned for each individual horse, based first on age and then on other conditions that may include regional climate conditions, stocking density, history of dewormer use, and results of fecal testing. Good management includes providing a clean environment and reviewing deworming programs each year.

Compound: Moxidectin w/Praziquantel	FOALS	2 - 3 Months Compound: Fenbendazole/ Oxibendazole Products: Anthelcide EQ, Panacur Paste, Safe-Guard Paste	4 - 5 Months Compound: Pyrantel Pamoate Products: Exodus Paste, Strongid Paste, FC Equistrength	6 - 7 Months Compound: Fenbendazole/ Oxibendazole Products: Anthelcide EQ, Panacur Paste, Safe- Guard Paste, Safe-Guard Equi-Bits	8 - 9 Months Compound: Ivermectin w/Praziquantel Products: Equimax, Zimecterin Gold	11 - 12 Months Compound: Fenbendazole/ Oxibendazole Products: Safe-Guard Power Dose, Panacur PowerPac	
Compound: Pyrantel Pamoate	ADOLESCENTS	Spring Compound: Ivermectin Products: FC Ivermax, Bimectin, Horse Health Ivermectin Paste, IverCare, Zimecterin	Early Summer Compound: Pyrantel Pamoate Products: Exodus Paste, Strongid Paste, FC Equistrength	Late Summer Compound: Fenbendazole/ Oxibendazole Products: Anthelcide EQ, Panacur Paste, Safe- Guard Paste, Safe-Guard Equi-Bits	Early Fall Compound: Pyrantel Pamote Products: Exodus Paste, Strongid Paste, FC Equistrength	Late Fall Compound: Ivermectin w/Praziquantel Products: Equimax, Zimecterin Gold	Late Winter/Early Spring Compound: Fenbendazole/ Oxibendazole Products: Safe-Guard Power Dose, Panacur PowerPac, Quest Gel, Quest Plus
Compound: Ivermectin	ADULT HIGH-SHEDDERS	Late Winter/Early Spring Compound: Fenbendazole/ Oxibendazole Products: Safe-Guard Power Dose, Panacur PowerPac	Spring Compound: Ivermectin or Moxidectin Products: FC Ivermax, Bimectin, Horse Health Ivermectin Paste, IverCare, Zimecterin, Quest Gel	Early Fall Compound: Fenbendazole/ Oxibendazole Products: Anthelcide EQ, Panacur Paste, Safe- Guard Paste, Safe-Guard Equi-Bits	Late Fall Compound: Ivermectin or Moxidectin w/ Praziquantel Products: Equimax, Zimectrin Gold, Quest Plus		
Compound: Fenbendazole/Oxibendazole	ADULT LOW-SHEDDERS	Late Winter/Early Spring Compound: Fenbendazole/ Oxibendazole Products: Safe-Guard Power Dose, Panacur Paste, Safe-Guard Paste, Panacur PowerPac	Spring Compound: Pyrantel Pamoate Products: Exodus Paste, Strongid Paste, FC Equistrength	Late Fall Compound: Ivermectin w/Praziquantel Products: Equimax, Zimecterin Gold	acur [®] are registered products of Merck	Animal Health. "Anthelcide" FQ. Quest	and Strongid [®] are registered products of Pfize

*See label for complete indications, precautions, warnings, residue information and use directions.

