

## Vital Signs: Temp Checks

What you'll need:

1. Thermometer (digital or mercury)
2. String (to attach Fergusto end of thermometer)
3. Petroleum jelly

Many equine facilities mandate temperature readings twice daily on every horse. Checking temperatures rectally is an accurate, fast way to monitor your horse's health status. Don't wait until an emergency to learn this procedure!

1. If using a mercury thermometer, don't forget to shake down the mercury before beginning.
2. Tie your horse securely, or have someone hold him at his head.
3. Lubricate the tip of the thermometer with petroleum jelly.
4. Move your horse's tail to the side, and insert the thermometer into the rectum, angled slightly towards the ground.
5. For the most accurate reading, leave the thermometer in position for at least 3 minutes. Many digital thermometers work well in less than 1 minute.
6. Always clean the thermometer well after use (especially if you suspect your horse is ill) to prevent the spreading of an illness.

If your horse's temperature exceeds 102.5 F, contact your veterinarian immediately. Normal temperatures are 99.5 to 101.5 F. Temperatures higher than 103 F indicate a serious disorder.

Plastic, digital thermometers are the easiest to use, but be sure to purchase one with a string attached to the end – or secure your own string – to avoid 'losing' the thermometer while it is reading the horse's temperature.