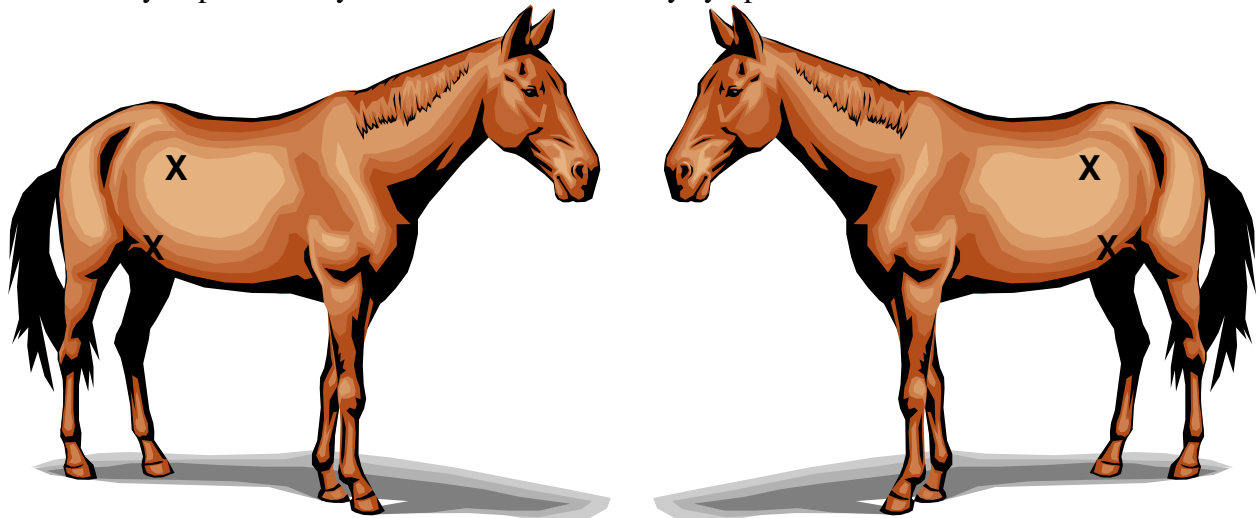


Checking Bowel Sounds

Bowel sounds are the result of the propulsive movement of the intestines and its' contents (food, fluid, gas). If a horse is behaving in a colicky manner, providing information about the bowel sounds will be very useful to you and your veterinarian. As always, assess your horse's behavior and maintain your safety first. Check the bowel sounds and vital signs as you are able to share with your veterinarian.

Normal bowel sounds are mostly low pitched sounds such as gurgling or rumbling and can be heard 24 hours a day. When the horse experiences colic type symptoms, the presence of bowel sounds and the character of the sounds commonly change. Bowel sounds may be absent in an area and/or may change in character to more high pitched, tympanic or echoing sounds (like water dripping in a well). Assess the sounds in the four quadrants of the horse's abdomen and be prepared to listen in *each area* for up to 2 – 5 minutes. It is a good idea to practice this skill when your horse is well and cooperative so you will be familiar with the 'normal' sounds of the gut and ready to proceed if your horse exhibits colicky symptoms.



Use a stethoscope to listen to the sounds for 2- 5 minutes in each area marked with the **X** above. Keep the stethoscope still to hear the intestinal sounds rather than the sounds of the stethoscope moving around on the coat. Report your findings to your veterinarian as needed.

Right Side	Left Side
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The right flank area gives clues about activity in the cecum• The right abdomen area gives clues about the right dorsal & ventral colon	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The left flank area gives clues about activity in the small intestines• The left abdomen area gives clues about the left dorsal & ventral colon and the pelvic flexure between these two structures.