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## **Understanding and Identifying Normal Health Parameters for Your Horse**

**Temperature, Pulse and Respiration (TPR):** The normal ranges on an adult healthy horse at rest are as follows:

- Temp: 99.5-100.5° Fahrenheit, taken rectally with a digital thermometer.
- Pulse: 28-52 beats per minute (bpm), taken with a stethoscope behind the left elbow, or palpated under the jaw.
- Respiration: 8-16 breaths per minute (bpm), counted by watching the chest move or the nostrils flare.

Weather conditions will affect these values (i.e. higher on hot days).

We recommend learning and tracking the normal values for your horse to better understand and recognize when an abnormality is occurring.

**Mucous Membrane Color (MM):** Mucous membrane color provides an important clue to the overall condition of the horse. Normal color of MM should be light to medium pink and moist to the touch.

- Very pale to white may indicate blood loss
- Bright red may indicate a toxic condition
- Grey to Blue indicates severe shock
- Bright yellow possibly indicates a liver disease

**Capillary Refill Time (CRT):** The capillary refill time is an indicator of the horse's hydration status. Normal CRT is usually less than two seconds. To test this, press your thumb lightly for a few seconds on the gums of the horse. Then remove your thumb and count the seconds it takes for the membrane to return to its color state. You can practice this on your finger or toe nails. A prolonged time may be significant.

**Skin tent/Hydration status:** Hydration is an important measure of condition and health. To measure the hydration level, pinch the skin on the point of the shoulder or directly under the lower eye lid. Measurements taken on the neck can be inaccurate. Normal skin is elastic and will become flat immediately after being released. Skin that remains elevated is an indicator of dehydration.