

HAYES EQUINE VETERINARY SERVICES

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Oh No! What have you DONE?!

We've all been there. We walk out to the pasture to ride or feed, and our horse comes up to us (happy as can be, usually) with a giant bloody wound somewhere on their body that may or may not still be bleeding. Ok, time to reach for the phone and call the vet. She should be at your ranch in 30-45 minutes.

While you are waiting: Catch the horse! Nothing is more frustrating for a veterinarian than stopping what they were doing to get to your house and find this injured horse running around in a huge pasture uncaught. Even if the horse is normally easy to catch, the presence of a veterinarian immediately makes them suspicious, and even the most well-behaved horse can decide to lead you on a merry chase. Have the horse caught and either up by the gate or in the barn for when the veterinarian arrives. This will expedite the treatment process tremendously.

Is the wound bleeding? If yes, apply some sort of bandage with pressure to try and stop the bleeding. One of the best things that works to stop bleeding is actually a heavy flow maxi pad. If possible, like when the wound is on a leg, applying the maxi pad to the wound and then securing with vetrap will oftentimes be enough to have the bleeding under control by the time the vet gets there.

Clean the worst of the mud, dirt, and dried blood from around the wound as possible without disturbing the wound. Having a semi-clean area for the veterinarian to get a good exam done can really help the veterinarian identify the problem faster.

Is the area where your veterinarian going to be working well lit? Many people don't have the luxury of barns with electricity, so finding other sources of lighting before the veterinarian gets there can be extremely helpful. Shop lights are a great source of light when overhead lighting is unavailable. Truck lights will do in a pinch, but oftentimes unless the truck is running, the lights will turn off automatically. And a running diesel truck tends to be noisy and can disturb a sedated horse, and can make parts of a physical exam difficult for the veterinarian.

DO NOT give any medications prior to the vet arriving, especially to a bleeding horse. Many people want to reach for the bute or banamine right after they notice an injury, but sometimes inflammation can actually be helpful. The body's natural response of swelling after an injury can sometimes provide enough pressure to help slow bleeding. Your veterinarian will have pain medications and antibiotics on hand to give after at least an initial assessment has been done.

There are few things more stressful than finding our beloved animals cut and bleeding. But with a little extra preparedness on the owner's part, a veterinarian's visit can be quick and painless.