



Gastroscopy Preparation

Gastroscopy utilizes a small camera to visualize the esophagus, stomach and proximal small intestine, and in order to maximize visibility it is necessary for the horse's stomach to be completely empty at the time of examination. This generally requires a fasting (no food; i.e. hay, grain, treats) period of 12-18 hours prior to gastroscopic examination. For example, if your horse's appointment is at 10 AM, he or she should not receive any food after 6-8 PM the previous day. Water can be available to the horse ad libitum during this time period. It is important that no hay be consumed on the trailer ride to the hospital if you are hauling in for your appointment.

On arrival, your horse will have a general physical examination performed and a history taken by a team of doctors. After that examination is complete, your horse will be sedated and his or her gastroscopy will be performed. This will involve passing a short nasogastric tube to guide the endoscope (camera) into the esophagus. Full evaluation requires gastric insufflation (distension of the stomach with room air), which is removed once the procedure is complete. Occasionally, this gas distension can make horses uncomfortable and lead to signs of mild gas colic, which is why we recommend keeping the horse in the hospital and/or monitoring them closely until their sedation has completely worn off (generally 30-60 minutes after the procedure).