



## **Acorn Poisoning**

Oak trees are commonly found near horse pastures. Acorns and young oak leaves contain tannins which are poisonous to horses so it is important all horse owners are aware of this.

Acorn poisoning is most common in the autumn when the acorns fall from the trees. The number of cases we see from year to year varies depending on the acorn crop.

Most horses will not choose to eat acorns if there is adequate forage available, although some will develop a taste for them and actively Hoover them up.

Acorn poisoning in horses can cause a variety of symptoms from being unusually quiet and off their food right through to death. Other symptoms include constipation, diarrhoea (which can be bloody), colic and kidney problems. Symptoms usually develop within 12 to 36 hours of eating acorns.

Unfortunately there is no specific antedote, but your vet will provide supportive treatment such as fluids to help them recover. The bad news is there is a high fatality rate particularly if the kidneys or gut are badly damaged. The best way to prevent it is to avoid your horse eating acorns all together.

It is important to check your fields for Oak trees. During risk periods we recommend either fencing off the area, picking up the acorns or moving pastures until the acorns have rotted down or disappeared into the soil. If you have large areas of pasture affected by Oak trees, rolling the acorns into soft ground can stop your horse being able to eat them.

**Remember acorn poisoning can be potentially life threatening, so if you spot the symptoms or are concerned call your Vet without delay.**

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