

# GASTROSCOPY GUIDE



## What is a gastroscopy?

A gastroscopy can provide a definitive answer as to whether your horse is suffering from **gastric ulcers**. It allows us to visualise the lining of the stomach by passing a **3m long endoscope** through the nasal passage into the back of the throat, where it is then **swallowed into the oesophagus**. The endoscope is then passed **down the oesophagus to the stomach**. The horse is **sedated** for this procedure, and it should take **approximately 15 minutes** to carry out.

## What are gastric ulcers?

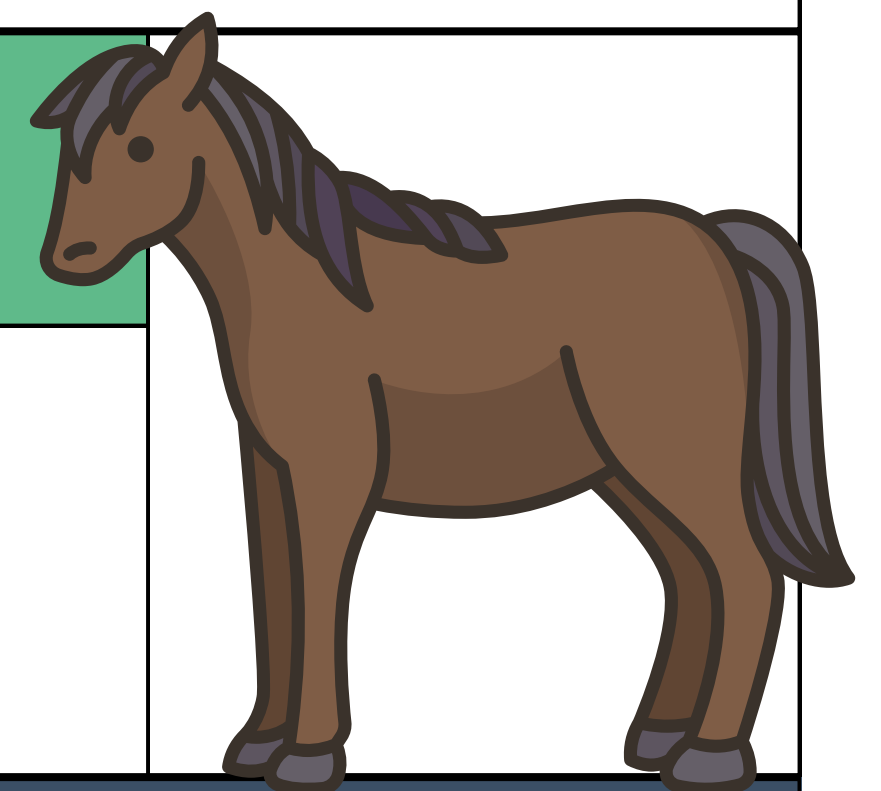
Gastric ulcers are caused by **prolonged exposure to acid in the stomach**, leading to erosion of the stomach lining. Ulcers can appear in two areas; the glandular mucosa and the squamous mucosa.

Ulcers here can be caused by forage deprivation, exercise on an empty stomach, high work intensities and diets high in concentrates.

## How do I know if my horse has gastric ulcers?

Symptoms include:

- Poor condition
- Reluctance to eat
- Discomfort whilst girthing or grooming
- Recurrent, or acute colic
- Weight loss
- Poor performance
- Changes in attitude and/or behaviour



## What is the procedure prior to a gastroscopy?

**The stomach must be empty**, therefore the horse **should not** have access to any food for **12 hours prior to the procedure**. Ideally the horse should be on inedible bedding. It is advisable to muzzle your horse if they are likely to eat any bedding or faeces.

**Water** should be **removed 2 hours prior** to the procedure.



## What happens after the gastroscopy?

After the procedure, your horse **needs to wake up from the sedation**; this can take up to an hour. **Once awake**, your horse **can be fed and have water** back in the stable. We suggest a wet feed or small amount of wet forage to start with. If your horse does have gastric ulcers then a **treatment plan** will be devised, including medication, diet and management changes. After treatment, it is advised that your horse has a **repeat gastroscopy** to see if the condition has improved.

