

## Referring Colics

The absolute key to success in colic surgery is being able to make the decision to perform surgery as soon as possible. The owners must be warned early on in the course of the disease about the potential need for surgery. The diagnosis to make is not 'what is the precise lesion?' but a much more basic 'might this animal need surgical intervention?' If the answer is 'Yes' send it, please don't sit on it.

Your responsibilities, as the referring veterinarian, **prior** to referral of a colic case to the Canterbury Equine Clinic, are:

- Obtain a full history from the owners/trainer.
- Perform a full initial assessment, including a TPR, evaluation of gut sounds, hydration status and appearance of mucous membranes.
- If possible (depending on facilities and severity of colic), perform a rectal exam and pass a stomach tube to check for reflux and to give fluids.
- Give the horse an appropriate dose of analgesia (if the horse will most likely be referred as a surgical case, please do not give excessive amounts of analgesics as this creates a problem with post-operative analgesic management).
- Wait an appropriate amount of time to allow the analgesics to take effect (usually around 15-30 minutes) and re-evaluate the horse (heart rate, gut sounds, etc.).
- If signs of colic persist despite analgesia, a decision regarding referral of the case to the CEC for surgery should then be made.

If referring the case please:

- Ring us to inform us that it is coming in and to give us the details of the case.
- Complete our Referral Form (found on the website) when you are able and fax it to us (03 349 2137).
- Ensure that you have discussed surgery with the owners and that they understand the risks of the procedure and the cost of surgery.