



Ballybrown Equine Clinic



Ballybrown Equine Clinic, Ballybrown, Clarina, Co. Limerick, Ireland.

Tel: +353 (0)61 353296 Fax: +353 (0)61 353352 Email: info@horsevet.ie Web: horsevet.ie

CAST CARE

Better Health for your Horse

Your horse has been fitted with a cast to give it the best possible chance of recovery. A cast provides both protection and support and thereby gives the horse's injury a chance to heal. Because you can't actually see what's happening beneath a cast, caring for a convalescent horse requires careful observation.

YOUR HORSE'S CAST

Casts are used for a variety of problems such as some bone fractures, tendon and ligament injuries, wounds and abnormal growth and development.

Several important functions are:

- First Aid Tool.
- Immobilization of limbs.
- Overcoming tension - keeping skin from pulling apart at wound sites.
- Rigid Support – allows a horse to stand still and use the limb during convalescence.
- Protection and reduced concussion to the limb.
- External support – reinforcement for internal fixation devices such as plates or screws used in fracture repair.

BETTER TECHNOLOGY

Fortunately, casting materials and techniques have greatly improved over the years. Today, casts are generally made of lightweight fiberglass or plaster. They conform well to the horse's anatomy, set quickly, and are durable and strong.

A well constructed cast permits the skin to breath, the wound to drain, and is comfortable for the horse. Horses normally adjust quickly to wearing a cast.

The type of cast will depend on the nature and location of the injury.

- Full Cast – includes the foot and extends the length of the limb to just below the elbow or stifle
- Sleeve/Tube Cast – partial cast that generally covers only a portion of the limb but does not encase the foot (usually immobilizes the knee or hock).
- Half Limb/Distal Limb Cast – extends from below the knee or hock down to include the foot.
- Short Cast/Foot Cast – starts below the fetlock joint and covers the foot.

SYMPTOMS FOR CONCERN

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While your horse is in a cast, you will need to pay extra close attention to it. Check your horse several times a day, paying special attention to the cast area. Contact us at Ballybrown Equine Clinic immediately if you observe any of the following:

1. Increased pain or lameness.
2. Discharge from the cast that has a foul odour, unusual colour or seems to be excessive.
3. Swelling above or below the cast.
4. Focal warmth (noticeable heat emitting from the cast).
5. Elevated body temperature.
6. Chewing at, or other apparent irritation with the cast.
7. Recumbency – horse spends an abnormal amount of time lying down.
8. Secondary wounds – rub sites or pressure sores that develop where the cast contacts the skin.
9. Cast damage or breakage.
10. Lack of appetite or depression.

AFTERCARE

While your horse is in a cast, follow our instructions closely.

1. Prevent excessive movement by keeping your horse on box rest.
2. Check the horse regularly.
3. Keep the horse's environment clean and dry to prevent contamination of the cast or wound.
4. Seal the cast openings with tape to prevent dirt and debris from entering it. Check and change as required.
5. If the cast becomes dirty or wet, contact us. Follow cleaning and drying instructions explicitly.
6. Give medications only as prescribed by us.
7. Do not administer pain killers that could mask a horse's condition – unless specifically directed to do so by us.
8. Keep us updated to evaluate your horse's progress.