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How should I care for my horse during the fall weather change?

Any horse owner knows that variations in weather greatly affect our four legged companions. It is a source of stress and horses seem to have a hard time adapting to rapid changes in the weather. Some of the stress associated with variable weather patterns is that we often change their routines to protect them from the elements, horses that are used to being turned out may be stalled for several days to protect them from inclement weather. This change in routine, diet and activity level can cause a decrease in intestinal motility and make horses more prone to [colicking](#). Additionally, horse owners often notice that their horses' water consumption varies greatly based on the weather.

So how should we care for our horses during times of weather change? Well, there isn't a simple answer to that question. All horses are different and while some horses may need blanketing, others seem fine without them. If your horse needs a blanket, make sure to use waterproof breathable blankets and check to make sure that your horse isn't too warm under the blanket. It is important to establish routines with horses and to try to keep that routine as much as possible.

Some changes that are helpful to implement in times of weather change include encouraging water intake- make sure that water troughs aren't frozen; some horses don't like to drink extremely cold water, offer warm water; offer EquiTea or flavored water. In addition, we do recommend soaking all feed (grain and hay) to encourage further water intake and minimize chances of colic. Feeding a more laxative diet of timothy or alfalfa hay or a mix including some timothy or some alfalfa can also help minimize impaction colics which are common after times of weather change.

If you have specific questions about your horse's individual care, please [contact us](#) and we will be more than happy to develop a management plan that works for your horse and your individual needs.

Answered By: [Rich Metcalf, DVM](#)