



ANIMAL CARE AND WELL-BEING FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

HORSE



Q. Why do riders use crops or whips?

A. Crops and whips are aids that provide the rider an extension of his or her hand. Riders don't use them often but when they do, they use them to encourage horses to go forward, or in some cases, to go faster.

Q. Why do riders use spurs?

A. Spurs provide an extension to the rider's leg. Riders use them most often to encourage a horse to go forward. Some horses have also been taught to slow down or stop when spurs are used.

Q. Do shoes and bits hurt?

A. Properly applied shoes do not hurt and actually protect the horses' feet from bruising or excessive wear. Horseshoes are nailed into the horse's hoof wall, which is much like a human fingernail. Your nails don't hurt when you cut them if you do it correctly. Riders use bits to communicate with horses and to guide them. Properly fitted bits typically do not hurt the horse unless the rider pulls excessively or with poor timing.

Q. Do horses bite?

A. Horses sometimes bite accidentally, because they can't see things placed directly below their mouth, and can't distinguish between fingers and carrots. Less often, horses will bite in an effort to defend themselves from predators.



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Q. Why do some horses wear blankets?

A. Horses wear sheets or blankets at horse shows most often to keep their hair coats clean. Handlers must take care to make sure that horses don't get too hot or sweat under the sheet or blanket.

Q. Why does that horse have a collar?

A. Some horses have a bad habit called *cribbing*. The horse will set its teeth on an object such as a fence and suck in air. This behavior can wear down the teeth or sometimes cause other negative issues. Some horses wear a collar, or a *crib strap*, to prevent them from cribbing. The collar does not hurt or change how a horse breathes, but simply prevents it from being able to suck in the air.

Q. Can I feed fair food to the horse?

A. No. The horse's digestive tract is sensitive to changes and unusual foods. Feeding them fair food could make them sick. You should never feed a horse anything without asking the owner's permission.

Q. Why does the horse have a blindfold?

A. What looks like a blindfold is actually a *fly mask* made with small holes that the horse can see through. A fly mask protects the horse's eyes and face from flies or other biting insects.

Q. Does that horse with the bandages have a broken leg?

A. No. What appear to be bandages are actually *leg wraps*. Leg wraps protect the legs from cuts and scrapes, provide support, keep the legs clean or sometimes protect cuts from getting dirty. A horse wearing leg wraps is not injured.

Q. Why are the horses in stalls most of the day?

A. When horses are at shows, exhibitions or fairs, you'll often see them in stalls when not being ridden or shown. This keeps them safe and gives them a chance to rest from their work. While at home, horses are housed in a variety of situations. They may be in stalls part of the time and spend part of the time turned out to the field or pasture.



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