

Eye Injuries

Eye injuries are of special concern in the backcountry, as they can deteriorate very quickly, so these injuries need some special attention.

It is very difficult to tell the severity of eye injuries without the right equipment.

General First Aid Steps

1. Flush the eye with sterile saline solution.
2. Treat all eye injuries with Triple Antibiotic Ophthalmic ointment 3 times a day (every 4 hours) until the eye can be evaluated by your DVM. **DO NOT** use an ointment with steroid in it as it may cause the cornea to melt if there is an ulcer.
3. Protect the eye with a fly mask. **REMOVE fly mask if horse rubs its face.**
4. Control inflammation and decrease pain with Banamine IV, liquid Banamine orally, Banamine paste, or Bute paste (refer to Equine Medications instructions sheet)
5. **Seek Veterinary assistance as soon as possible**

Foreign Bodies: Foxtails, dirt, sawdust, hay, pine needles, etc. can lodge in the tissues around the eye or hide under the eyelids.

Signs

- Squinting
- Eyelid(s) may swell
- Severe tearing
- Pus discharge
- Foreign body may be visible

First Aid

1. Examine the eye and remove any foreign bodies.
2. Examine the eye from the side using a small flashlight. If the foreign body doesn't extend very far into the eye, it is best to remove it.
 - a. Sedate with Rompum IM (refer to Equine Medications instruction sheet)
 - b. Extract the foreign body with the hemostats.
 - c. **If the foreign body extends into the cornea or eye bulb, DO NOT remove it; seek Veterinary assistance as soon as possible.** Taping the eyelid closed is an option if it will prevent any further damage to the eye.
3. Flush the eye with sterile saline solution.
4. Administer Triple Antibiotic Ophthalmic ointment 3 times a day (every 4 hours).
5. Protect the eye with a fly mask. **REMOVE fly mask if horse rubs its face.**
6. **Seek Veterinary assistance as soon as possible**

Eyelid Lacerations: The eyelids can be easily torn or cut by brush and obstacles.

Signs

- The signs are obvious, a torn and bleeding lid

First Aid

These wounds heal well when sutured.

They do not always need Veterinary attention immediately, and often your ride can be finished.

1. Flush the eye out often with sterile saline solution.
2. Administer Triple Antibiotic Ophthalmic ointment 3 times a day (every 4 hours).
3. Administer Pen G (refer to Equine Medications instruction sheet)
4. Have your DVM debride and suture the eyelid when you arrive home.

Corneal Injury: The cornea can be scratched or punctured by foreign bodies

Signs

- Squinting
- Discharge from the eye
- Visible cloudy spot on the cornea

First Aid

1. Examine the eye for foreign bodies.
2. Flush the eye with sterile saline solution.
3. Administer Triple Antibiotic Ophthalmic ointment 3 times a day (every 4 hours).
4. Protect the eye with a fly mask. **REMOVE fly mask if horse rubs its face.**
5. **Seek Veterinary help as soon as possible.**