

# What to expect

## EQUINE COLIC



52 Campus Drive, Saskatoon SK S7N 5B4

**Small Animal Clinic**  
306-966-7126

**Large Animal Clinic**  
306-966-7178

### About the VMC

Welcome to the WCV Veterinary Medical Centre (VMC), the veterinary referral centre for all of Western Canada and the teaching hospital for future veterinarians and veterinary specialists.

Our clinical team includes board-certified veterinary specialists, clinical associates and registered veterinary technologists, as well as veterinary specialists in training (residents), clinical interns and senior veterinary students. We look forward to caring for your animal and meeting you in person.

### Before Your Visit

To prepare for your visit to the VMC, please visit us online:

[vmc.usask.ca/about/new-client.php](http://vmc.usask.ca/about/new-client.php)

You will find more information about finding our location, parking, hours of operation and the Large Animal Clinic reception area.

### What to Expect

While the WCV Veterinary Medical Centre (VMC) shares many similarities to other veterinary hospitals, there are some differences that may have an impact on your appointment.

- The VMC is a teaching hospital for WCV veterinary students and for students enrolled in the veterinary technology program at the Saskatchewan Polytechnic. Please note that teaching takes additional time. Students participate in all aspects of examining and treating our patients under the immediate supervision of licensed veterinarians and board-certified veterinary specialists. While teaching is essential to our facility, the well-being of our patients is the highest priority for VMC clinical teams.
- Given the complexity of referral cases, we often need to order additional diagnostic testing or consult with others about diagnoses and treatment plans for patients. If you are travelling from out of town, please be prepared to stay two days in Saskatoon with your animal. In some cases, your stay may need to be longer. During your appointment, we will give you an estimate of the length of time it may take for additional tests and consultation.

### General Steps

Because equine colic is an emergent issue, our clinical team's priority will be to provide pain relief and to assess the status of your horse immediately on arrival.

A typical colic emergency will include the following steps:

- If your horse colics out-of-hours, a house officer (clinical interns or residents who are licensed veterinarians) will answer your call and ask for general information about your horse and its colic signs so we can best prepare for your horse's arrival. If you are travelling a far distance, please call us again when you are about 30 minutes away from the Large Animal Clinic.
- The house officer will also give you a general cost estimate when you call. Please note that the VMC charges an emergency fee for any out-of-hours visit.



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[www.usask.ca/wcvm](http://www.usask.ca/wcvm)

## Payment

If your animal is not hospitalized, the WCVM Veterinary Medical Centre requires full payment at the time of service.

If your animal is hospitalized, half of the estimated cost is due prior to services being provided. Final payment is due at the time of discharge.

Occasionally, the hospital will mail statements to you after discharge for additional tests that were approved by you and for charges not included on the initial invoice at discharge.

The WCVM Veterinary Medical Centre accepts the following payment methods:

- cash
- credit card (Visa and MasterCard)
- debit card (Interac)

**Personal cheques are not accepted.**

If you have questions about payment, call the administration office at 306-966-7103, or visit [vmc.usask.ca/about/payment.php](http://vmc.usask.ca/about/payment.php).

## For more information

**Large Animal Clinic**  
306-966-7178  
[vmccorrespond@usask.ca](mailto:vmccorrespond@usask.ca)

## General Steps, continued . . .

- Two senior veterinary students, two house officers (representing medicine and surgery) and a registered veterinary technologist will meet you at the Large Animal Clinic entrance and help you unload your horse.
- Our team will weigh your horse and take it into the stocks. During the initial examination, we may need to sedate your horse for its own safety as well as the safety of our clinical team.
- A veterinary student and a house officer will gather a complete medical history and ask you further questions about the current colic episode. Meanwhile, other veterinary students and veterinarians will perform an initial physical examination and collect bloodwork.
- A routine colic examination (or work-up) includes an abdominal ultrasound exam, a rectal exam, nasogastric tubing and a belly tap (if it's considered necessary). These procedures help us determine the cause of the colic and whether surgical correction is needed.
- During the work-up, you may wait in the clinic's reception area or you can stay with your horse until we can provide you with a summary of our findings and management options. The work-up process will generally take 45 to 60 minutes, depending on the case. If you choose to leave the hospital, we will contact you as soon as we have further information.
- All horses presenting for colic will be hospitalized for monitoring and/or treatment for at least one night. The length of stay will vary depending on the horse's response to treatment.
- If the horse needs surgery, we will discuss this option with you. Please note that surgery might not need to happen right away, but it's important to have this conversation early on. Please inform us if your horse is insured.
- Your horse will initially be fasted, receive intravenous fluids and pain medications (if needed) and will be continuously monitored by our clinical team. **If your horse starts to colic again, our team will reassess its condition.**
- Once your horse is normal, we will implement a gradual refeeding plan over a few days. You will receive daily updates about your horse and are welcome to visit.

#### General Steps, continued . . .

- We recommend that you leave your horse in the hospital until it has been eating its regular hay ration for at least 24 hours without showing signs of colic.
- We will let you know when your horse is ready to be discharged. Full bill payment is required before discharge.
- Discharge recommendations will be discussed with you. We will print these recommendations at the time of discharge or email them to you by the next day.