GASTRIC ULCERS
IS IT THE WHOLE PICTURE?

Recognising changes and understanding why we look at the whole horse.

WHAT MIGHT YOU NOTICE?

- ☑ Becoming fussier or slower with feed.
- ☑ Leaving meals unfinished.
- ☑ Losing weight or struggling to maintain condition.
- ☑ Reacting differently during grooming or saddling.
- ☑ Changes in attitude or interaction.
- ☑ Reduced willingness or performance under saddle.
- ☑ Episodes of abdominal discomfort.



These signs do not automatically mean gastric ulcers. They can accompany other causes of abdominal pain or discomfort elsewhere in the body. Some horses with ulcers show few outward signs. If your horse shows signs of colic or significant distress, contact your vet promptly.

WHAT HAS CHANGED AROUND YOUR HORSE

Your observations help us understand the bigger picture. Think about when the changes began and what else was happening at the time.

- Has their feed, forage access or time between meals changed?
- Have they returned to work or increased their workload?
- Have they travelled, competed or moved properties?
- Have their companions, turnout or daily routine changed?
- Have you noticed any other signs of pain or discomfort?

ELITE EQUINE VETERINARIANS

You don't need to know the cause before asking for help. Noticing a change is a useful starting point.

WHAT CAN GASTROSCOPY TELL US?

Gastroscopy allows us to directly examine the stomach lining with a camera and confirm whether gastric ulcers are present. It also identifies whether the squamous region, glandular region or both are affected. These are different forms of gastric disease, so treatment and management may differ.
We interpret what we see alongside your horse's history and examination. Lesion appearance alone does not tell us how much a horse is affected, particularly with glandular disease.



WHY LOOK BEYOND THE STOMACH?

Finding ulcers is an important finding. Understanding the whole horse guides the plan.

Ulcers may explain some of the changes you've noticed, but other problems can be present too. Depending on your horse's history and examination, we may also investigate musculoskeletal pain, dental problems or other abdominal conditions. The aim is to address your horse's comfort and welfare while supporting your goals for their health and performance.

WHAT DOES ONGOING CARE INVOLVE?

An individual plan may include:

- Treatment suited to the type of gastric disease identified.
- Reviewing feeding, forage access and workload.
- Reducing manageable sources of stress.
- Addressing other sources of discomfort.
- Follow-up examinations tailored to your horse.

Forage advice must also account for body condition, metabolic health and laminitis risk. The right plan is the one that suits the individual horse.

You know your horse's normal.

If their appetite, attitude or performance has changed, your observations can help us decide what to investigate.
Please reach out to the Elite Equine team if you have questions or concerns.

0412 619 740
vets@eliteequinevets.com.au

Elite Equine Veterinarians
Your horse, Our priority.