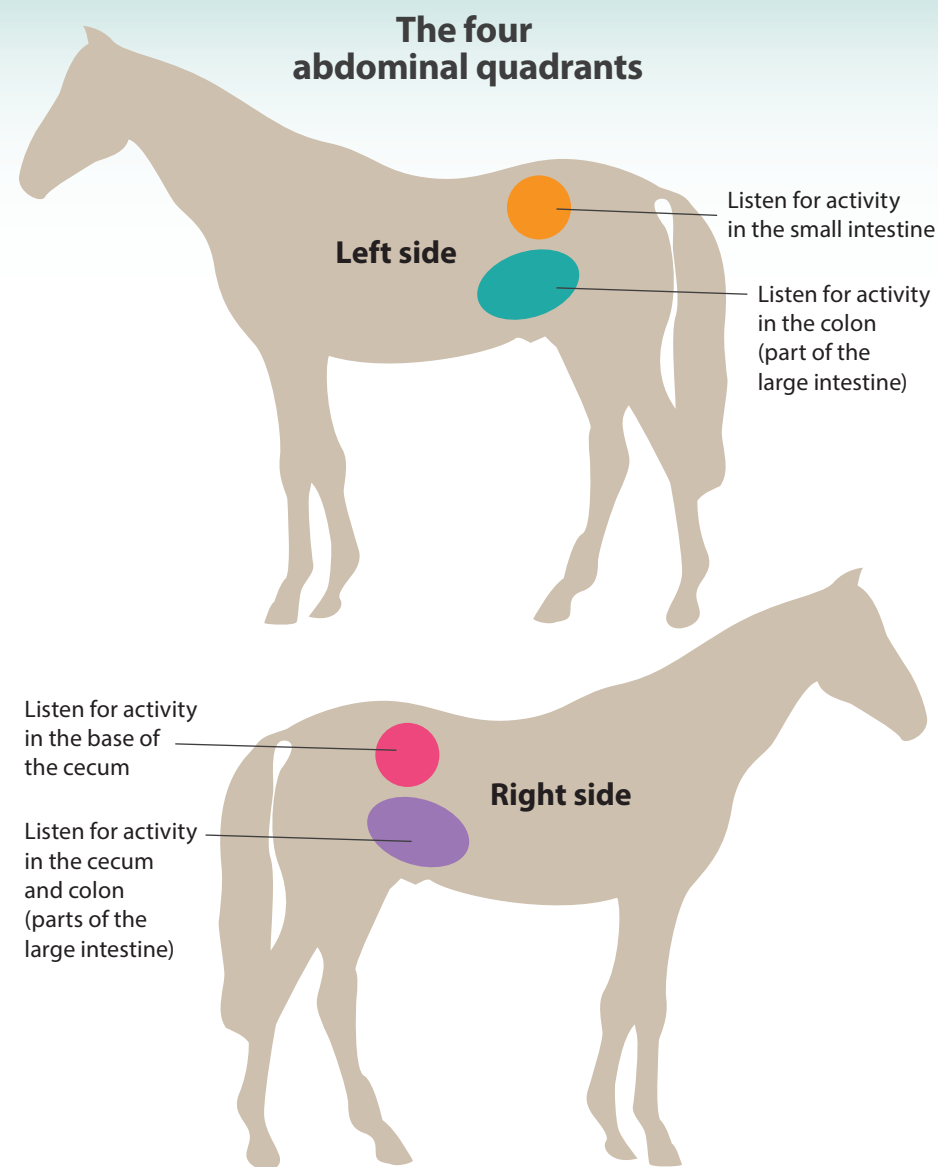


## What Should My Horse's Gut Sound Like?

During a physical exam a veterinarian will listen to your horse's gut sounds with a stethoscope in the flank area.

### What lies below the stethoscope?

When listening for gut sounds, your veterinarian will evaluate both sides of the horse. The abdomen is divided into four areas or quadrants: left side top and bottom, and right side top and bottom.



- **The upper left quadrant** is where sounds from the small intestine can be heard. This quadrant can be quieter than others because it typically contains smaller quantities of fluid and gas, but sounds should still be present.
- **The lower left quadrant** overlies the left upper and lower colon.
- **The upper right quadrant** overlies the base of the cecum.
- **Lower right quadrant** overlies the large intestine. Constant motility and large quantities of fluid and gas are expected to be found in this quadrant. Sounds should be consistent and of a greater intensity than those heard in the upper left quadrant.

The technical term for a gut sound is a **borborygmus** (pronounced bôr'bě-rĭg'məs). The plural is **borborygmi**.

### How many borborygmi should you listen for?

From 1-3 borborygmi per minute  **NORMAL**

Less than 1 borborygmus per minute  **HYPOMOTILE** (not enough movement)

More than 3 borborygmi per minute  **HYPERMOTILE** (too much movement)

### Hypermotile Gut

Typically when a horse presents with impending enterocolitis, which often results in diarrhea, he will have a hypermotile gut with increased liquid and gas sounds.

### Hypomotile Gut

Hypomotility is the sign of a poor gut movement and an absence of gut sounds may indicate the presence of an obstruction.



Borborygmi alone cannot be used to identify an illness; a complete physical exam and the review of other symptoms are necessary to properly diagnose and treat diseases of the gastrointestinal tract.

**Ask your veterinarian to help you learn how to use and position the stethoscope properly and what to listen for.**

Low-pitched gurgling and rumbling gut sounds can be heard constantly in a normal horse. Practice listening to each quadrant when your horse is healthy, so you know what is normal for him/her.

When a horse is experiencing digestive malfunctions, the presence, character and type of gut sounds changes. Sounds maybe absent, more frequent or higher-pitched or echoing.

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