

Lower Respiratory Issues:

Condition	What is it?	Causes	Clinical Signs	Diagnosis	Treatment	Prevention
Equine Asthma	A chronic noninfectious, inflammatory obstructive lower airway disorder	Stall confinement and breathing in aeroallergens, such as dust, mold, smoke and pollen	Coughing, nasal discharge, nasal flaring, increased breathing effort at rest, abnormal lung sounds	History, physical exam, routine bloodwork, +/- bronchoalveolar lavage (BAL)	Environmental management, not feeding dry hay, omega-3 fatty acid supplementation, corticosteroids, and bronchodilators	Good ventilation, turnout, and feeding low-dust forages.
Respiratory Virus	A respiratory tract and/or lung infection caused by contagious viral pathogen	Inhaling or coming into contact with viruses such as equine influenza virus, equine herpesvirus, equine arteritis virus, and rhinitis virus	Nasal discharge, fever, cough, depression and anorexia	Testing nasopharyngeal swabs and blood serum samples	Supportive care such as non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medication, fluids, and rest.	Vaccination and proper biosecurity protocols
Bacterial Pneumonia	Infection associated with stress and immune system compromise, also known as “shipping fever”	Aspirating food while traveling, exercise or under general anesthesia; exposure to pathogen; secondary to viral infection	Gurgling sound in the trachea, fever, depression, respiratory distress, nasal discharge, coughing, inappetence, exercise intolerance, and weight loss	Clinical signs, history, bloodwork, serum amyloid A testing, ultrasound, and TTW (transtracheal wash)	Antimicrobials, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medication, fluids, and bronchodilators	Good ventilation, low-dust hay, water provision during transport and housing
Exercise-Induced Pulmonary Hemorrhage	Bleeding into the lungs and airways during exercise	Most commonly strenuous exercise, but can also occur secondary to inflammation, upper airway obstruction, asthma or atrial fibrillation (heart arrhythmia)	Reduced performance, labored breathing, coughing, and bleeding from nostrils	Endoscopy or dynamic endoscopy exam, BAL	Rest and furosemide, +/- non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medication	Avoiding intense exercise, furosemide before exercise, nasal strips, and good barn ventilation

*source – *theHorse* magazine Dec. 2021 addition, article “4 Common Equine Respiratory Conditions”

