

## Psyllium Fibre

Psyllium fibre is a digestive supplement for horses. Made from psyllium seed husks, it absorbs water in the intestine, forming a gel like substance which picks up sand and dirt. For this reason it is often given to horses after an episode of sand colic.



Horses on pasture in areas of sandy soil are at risk of accumulating sand in the colon which may eventually causes colic. Sand colic occurs in high incidence in America, but is also seen in the UK during periods of dry weather in horses grazing sandy soils, such as in coastal or river estuary pastures.

Horses turned out in sand arenas may also be at risk.

### Clinical signs of sand ingestion

Horses may develop similar colic signs as seen with an impaction caused by straw/dry feed.

Sand can also be the cause of chronic diarrhoea in areas of sandy soil due to the abrasive nature of sand on the intestinal lining.

### KEY POINTS

- Psyllium fibre is a useful digestive supplement for horses.
- By binding sand and dirt, it is useful for clearing sand from the colon in cases of sand colic and diarrhoea.
- It can also be used as a treatment for certain types of colitis (inflammation of the large bowel).



**FAECES AND WATER LEFT TO SETTLE WITH SAND ACCUMULATING IN THE BOTTOM**

## Diagnosis of sand ingestion

The easiest way to know that sand is present in the intestine is to mix some faeces in water and leave it to settle. If sand accumulates in the bottom, it is likely that using psyllium fibre may benefit these horses.

## TREATMENT OF SAND INGESTION

Treatment with psyllium fibre acts as a bulk forming laxative. Water is absorbed to form a gel which can bind the sand from the gut, allowing it to be excreted in the droppings.

Horses grazing high risk pasture may be given a maintenance dose as a preventative against sand related colic and diarrhoea.



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