

AT A GLANCE

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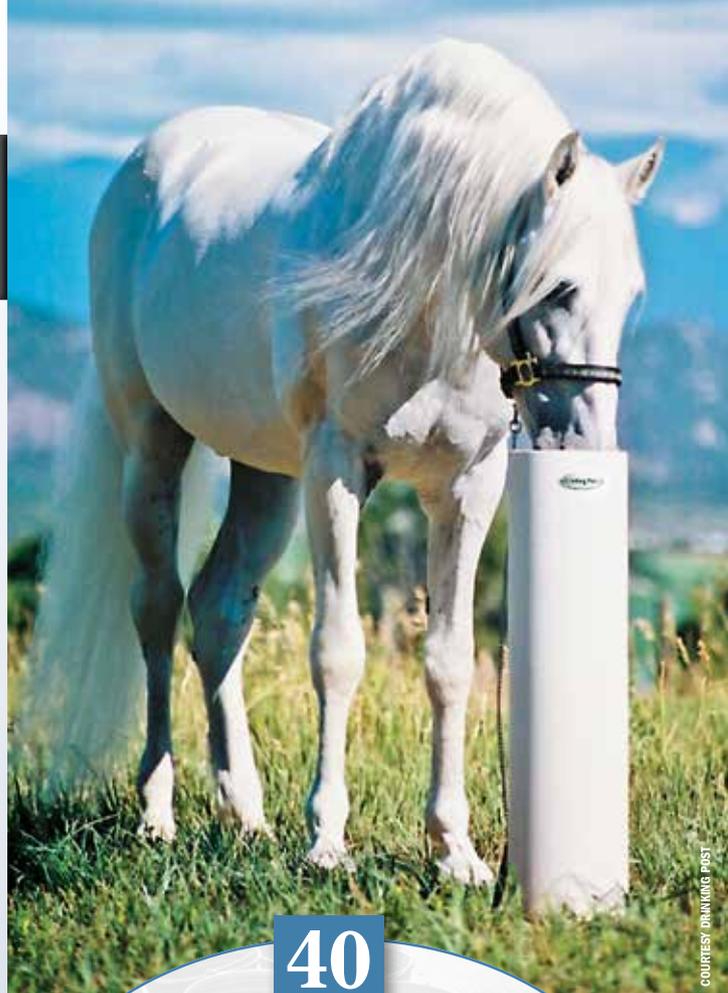
The Good DRINK

By Christa Lesté-Lasserre, MA

He's drinking it, so it must be fine. Right? Don't bet on it.

Horses need to drink. If their water isn't sanitary or the right temperature, many will drink it anyway because they have no other choice. Others might refuse it or not drink sufficient quantities. As a result, these horses are at risk of developing a variety of health conditions related to not only unsanitary water consumption but also water deprivation.

To ensure your horse stays hydrated, provide him with fresh, clean, clear water at appropriate drinking temperatures.



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The average number of liters—equivalent to 10.5 gallons—of water horses tend to drink every day.

That number rises as exercise intensities and summer temperatures increase. It also goes up in winter when dry hay replaces moisture-rich grass.

What Is Clean Water?



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It might seem obvious that clear water is cleaner than muddy water. But there's much more to being clean than just clarity. How does your horse's water compare?

	CLEAN	UNCLEAN
COLOR	Transparent	Brown, green, white
ENVIRONMENTAL RUNOFF	Protected from contamination	Tainted by runoff waste or chemicals/pesticides
PLANT LIFE	No plants or only nontoxic plants	Presence of blue-green (cyanobacteria) or other toxic algae
RECEPTACLE	Flushed or cleaned regularly	Lined with crusty or slimy debris

Getting the Temperature Right

Ever had an ice-cream headache? Ingesting food or drink that's too far removed from body temperature can be unpleasant for humans and animals alike. Here's what to aim for with your horse's water temperature and the consequences of going beyond certain limits.

<32°F	32° to 45°F	45° to 65°F	65° to about 100***	>100°F
Hard, undrinkable	Limited consumption (even though horses seem to prefer this temperature*)	Ideal temperature for maximum consumption	Limited consumption, more amenable to organic growth (algae, larvae, and microorganisms)	Likely to scald, undrinkable

*Studies by University of Pennsylvania researchers showed that when given the choice, horses preferred to drink cooler water. However, they drank less of it than when they were offered warmer water only.

**No known studies on the upper limits of drinking water temperatures exist.

The Automatic Waterer

Good-quality automatic waterers provide on-demand water from a potable water source, which flows rather than remaining stagnant. Many waterers can also moderate temperature year-round. Automatic waterers require regular verifications to check proper functioning.



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Stagnant vs. Flowing Water

Standing, stagnant water is the ideal environment for the wrong kinds of organisms. It works like an incubator for various larvae, mainly those of mosquitoes and flies. Its stable ecosystem also encourages rapid growth of toxic algae as well as many viruses and bacteria, especially with rising temperatures.



Water-Related Equine Diseases

- **Dehydration colic** from low water intake;
- **Blue-green algae** toxicity marked mainly by colic/diarrhea;
- **West Nile virus** and other viral encephalitic diseases, from infected mosquitoes breeding in stagnant water sources;
- **Leptospirosis**, from *L. Pomona* bacteria in the urine of infected animals and wild-life running into a water source;
- **Potomac horse fever**, from bacteria that infect flukes (a flatworm) swimming freely in water sources or transported by freshwater snails; can also be transmitted to horses nearby through flying insects that consume the flukes;
- **E. coli infections** from bacteria falling from affected animals onto stagnant surface waters;
- **Seasonal pasture myopathy/atypical myopathy** from toxicity caused by fallen sycamore maple seeds soaking in drinking water; and
- **Equine protozoal myeloencephalitis (EPM)** from protozoal parasites in opossum feces that fall or run off into drinking water.



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What Happens if My Horse Doesn't Get Enough Water?

While a horse can survive (painfully) for several weeks without food, it takes only a few days of water deprivation to lead to death. Can you recognize the signs of dehydration?

- Dry mucous membranes
- Sunken eyes
- Poor skin elasticity
- Slow capillary refill
- Decreased digestive function

The Drinking Post Advantage:

- **Fresh, CLEAN WATER** every use
- **Eliminate standing water and reduce the threat of WNV and water borne illnesses**
- **All water drains out of bowl after every use**
- **Drains below frost line after every use on permanent installs**
- **NEVER ANY ALGAE = self-cleaning system**
- **EASY INSTALLATION** anywhere there is a pressurized waterline
- **Provides ~ 50 F (10 C) water year round**
- **Cool water in summer, warm water in winter**
- **Always clean. Always available.**



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DYK?

Horses lose fluids through sweat three times faster than humans do. They lose electrolytes (which work to hold water in the body) 10 times faster.

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