



# ON FARM GASTROSCOPY PREPARATION PROTOCOL

## IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS

### **The stomach MUST be empty.**

It is critical to the success of the procedure to:

- WITHHOLD FEED (including hay, grass, grain, and treats) for 10 hours
- WITHHOLD WATER for 6 hours
- REMOVE all hay and bedding from stall
- MUZZLE your horse during the no food/no water time period  
(please use a solid bottom muzzle, or tape the holes to prevent munching on anything)

### **Why remove bedding and muzzle your horse?**

Horses will eat straw, shavings, sawdust, etc. even through a muzzle and may even eat their own manure if hungry enough. We have muzzles to loan if you need one!

### **What is gastroscopy?**

Gastroscopy is a procedure used to view the inside of a horse's stomach. The procedure uses a 10-foot (3 meter) long endoscope/camera (shown right) passed into the stomach via the nose. Gastroscopy is the ONLY way to accurately diagnose stomach ulcers in horses. Ulcers are extremely common and can cause signs of colic, weight loss, poor performance, and much more. Gastroscopy is also used to identify tumors, impactions, and other issues.



### **About the procedure:**

Gastroscopy is typically scheduled for first thing in the morning, because of the fasting requirements. The procedure is not painful, but your horse will receive mild sedation to minimize stress and pass the scope into the stomach. The scope passes through the nose to the esophagus and into the stomach. Air from the scope is used to distend the stomach so the gastric surface can be observed and imaged. The stomach surface may be rinsed with water passed through the scope as well. The exam typically takes 15 to 30 minutes.

Following the procedure, your horse will be able to eat in approximately 1 hour. If your horse has been diagnosed with ulcers or other GI issues, the doctor will create a tailored treatment plan based on the degree of ulceration. Treatment plans may include various medications and follow-up scopings to monitor progress.



A Close-Up View of Equine Gastric Ulcers

**Your horse no longer has to be trailed to a hospital or clinic for scoping!**

If you have any questions, please contact **Total Equine Veterinary Associates**  
by phone or text: 703.505.2320 or by email: [info@TotalEquineVets.com](mailto:info@TotalEquineVets.com)