

# TIPS FOR FEEDING Senior Horses

THE **HORSE**

YOUR GUIDE TO EQUINE HEALTH CARE

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GUARDIAN OF EQUINE HEALTH®

**Sentinel**



**F**eeding horses over the age of 15 doesn't have to be complicated. Many thrive on their usual diets, but some need adjustments to their nutrition based on health status and body condition. Learn how to manage your older horses' nutrition so they remain happy and healthy for the years to come.

## Evaluate Your Senior Horse's Needs

- ✓ Regularly check body condition (underweight, overweight, a melting topline or atrophied muscles).
- ✓ Look for any changes in eating behavior, loss of appetite, difficulty chewing hay.
- ✓ Get a thorough veterinary and dental exam. Look for teeth-related signs of quidding, dropping feed, and bad breath.
- ✓ Report frequent illness and/or nonhealing wounds to your vet.
- ✓ Watch for a decline in energy or mobility.
- ✓ Screen for kidney, liver, pituitary, or thyroid issues.
- ✓ Monitor deworming effectiveness with fecal egg count reduction testing.
- ✓ Observe social feeding behaviors. (Is the horse being bullied away from food?)
- ✓ Monitor water intake to prevent dehydration. If necessary, add water to hay and/or feed.

**Assess current diet and nutrient levels after the above have been addressed.**

## Key Feeding Recommendations

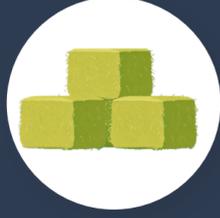
- ➔ **For healthy seniors:** Don't make any major changes unless needed, based on the above evaluations.
- ➔ **For senior horses with special needs:** Consider a specially formulated senior ration such as:



Free-choice forage/hay if dentition allows.



Extruded concentrates for ease of chewing, increased digestibility.



Other easy-to-chew fiber sources such as chopped hay, soaked hay cubes or beet pulp.



Decrease starch and sugar for horses with specific metabolic conditions.

## Supplements That Might Help

- ➔ **General Protein, Vitamin, Mineral Supplement With Amino Acids:** Supports topline and muscle.
- ➔ **High Fat Supplement:** Increases calories for body condition.
- ➔ **Gastric Supplement:** Supports digestive health.
- ➔ **General Protein Supplement:** Supports topline and muscle.
- ➔ **Vitamin C:** Supports immune function in aging horses; needed only if natural production is insufficient.
- ➔ **Joint Supplement or Injections:** Can offer support for horses with osteoarthritis.



## Take-Home Message

Work with your veterinarian or equine nutritionist to tailor recommendations for your own senior horse. Continually monitor his body condition, appetite, and behavior to catch any issues before they become severe. With proper nutrition and management, senior horses can stay healthy and thrive in their golden years.

