



This handout provides useful information on care of your horse before, during and after a CTR.<sup>1</sup>

### Pre – ride

1. Get to know your horse. As part of training and conditioning, learn to do your own “vet check exams”. Finish workouts with a quick “trot out” where your horse jogs beside you on a loose lead. Check for dehydration, pulse etc. Monitor your horses weight and keep a log book of your rides/mileage.
2. Maintain a regular deworming program. Long distance riding can exacerbate underlying parasite damage.
3. Bring a healthy horse to a ride. Check temperature, do a mini exam before leaving home and after arriving. Lunge in circles to check for lameness.
4. Bring the horse into the ride well hydrated. Electrolyte to encourage drinking upon arrival, feed sloppy mash, or even bring water from home for finicky drinkers. For horses accustomed to green grass, hand grazing on grass is excellent.
5. Minimize trailer stress. Provide water regularly. Use fly masks to protect the eyes. Horses trailered more than three hours need 12 hours to recover; more than five hours requires a full day. Loose up muscles after trailering through exercise.
6. Minimize feed changes. Make changes long before ride when possible. Make sure horse has plenty of forage. Plan what feed you will bring to the ride.
7. Watch EDPP-MF – eating, drinking, peeing, pooping and moving freely. Know what is normal and observe your horse for changes.
8. Plan your ride carefully, plan a ride time paces on past ride times, weather, trail conditions and conditioning of your horse. Ride to your plan, not to what other horses are doing.
9. Electrolyte starting well before the ride (as long as the horse drinks properly) at least the day before and the morning of a ride.
10. Maintain proper hoof care. Shoe appropriately for ride to minimize chances of injury and extra stress. Consider carrying a hoof boot with you for emergencies.
11. Secure horses at the ride site, make sure your horses are trailered to respect your stabling arrangements.



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<sup>1</sup> Modified from “Preventing treatment: Proper horsemanship before, during and after the ride” by the American Endurance Ride conference. Retrieved from [www.aerc.org](http://www.aerc.org)

## The ride

1. Watch EDPF-MF. All normal, fine. Of not slow down or stop. Consult a vet if you are concerned.
2. Try nothing new on ride day. Keep what is tried and true unless you hit unusual circumstances.
3. Hydrate, feed and rest early. Critical electrolyte and water losses in horses occur in the first 10 to 20 miles. Monitor progressive pulse recovery during check. The pulse should continue to drop during the hold period.
4. Know your horse and watch for ADR (ain't doing right). If ADR on trail, do a mini exam and consult with vet at check in.
5. Watch out for over excitement. This can cause early tie-ups, dehydration, etc. Warm your horse up thoroughly and/or wait a couple of minutes after the start and use the first couple of miles as a warm up.
6. Adjust pace for temperature and footing. Humidity, even if cool, necessitates slowing down as does heat. Muddy, sandy footing, single track, twisty side hill and even slippery grass require far more work as the horse cannot use his/her natural suspension system.
7. Give the horse every opportunity to drink. Wait at water stops, loosen the girth if necessary. Train your horse to drink.
8. Electrolyte regularly and often. Adjust for conditions and your horses needs.
9. Feed appropriately. Ensure the horse is getting enough energy for the pace of the ride.
10. Slow down coming into a vet check. Start out slow from a vet or warm up. Abrupt changes are hard.
11. Cover your horses on cool or wet/windy days to prevent cramping or tying up. Consider a rump rug.
12. Use body work, team work and massage at holds can really help your horse.



## Post ride

1. Watch for EDPF-MF. All normal fine, if not check with vet. Watch for a few days after the ride.
2. Rehydrate. Provide free access to water, offer sloppy mash.
3. Postpone concentrated feed, particularly if pulse stays up. Feed small amounts often. Free access to wet hay or grass is key.
4. Monitor post ride pulse recovery, dehydration level and gut sounds.
5. Cover if appropriate. Blanket if necessary if weather is cool; use rain sheets to keep dry if necessary.
6. See vet immediately if ADR or any question of hydration or colic.
7. Do not trailer horse home until adequately recovered and hydrated. Ideally, trailer home the next day so that the horse has overnight to recover.