

Dummy Foal Syndrome 2023

If you are part of the equine world, you've probably heard of Dummy Foal Syndrome, but what is it exactly? Dummy Foal Syndrome is a common term for Hypoxic Ischemic Encephalopathy (HIE). HIE describes neurologic or behavioral abnormalities in newborn foals that are due to lack of oxygen delivery to the foal's brain. This can be caused by complications during gestation or parturition (birthing).

HIE foals can show a variety of abnormal behaviors that range from mild to severe. Foals can be disoriented or wandering and may not recognize the mare. They may have a weak suckle reflex and the tongue may hang out of its mouth. More severe signs involve head pressing, inability to stand, trouble breathing, or seizures.

Treatment for HIE aims at managing clinical signs and includes nutritional support, seizure control, oxygen therapy, and antimicrobial or anti-inflammatory drugs. Another treatment is the Madigan Squeeze technique that serves to simulate the birth canal and "revive" the foal.

It is important to closely observe newborn foals and have them examined by a veterinary shortly after birth. This ensures that they have a healthy start to life!

What do you look for to make sure your new foal is happy and healthy?

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