

RECOGNIZING AND PREVENTING

# Failure of Passive Transfer

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THE **HORSE**

YOUR GUIDE TO EQUINE HEALTH CARE

## What is Failure of Passive Transfer?

Foals are born without any immune protection against infectious disease organisms.

All foals receive infection-fighting proteins called antibodies from their dam's colostrum within the first 24 hours of life, a process known as passive transfer.

If a foal does not obtain an adequate amount of antibodies from quality colostrum, then he will not be protected from disease-causing organisms such as viruses and bacteria. This is referred to as failure of passive transfer (FPT).

### A FEW DAYS before foaling



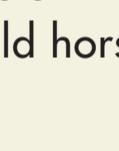
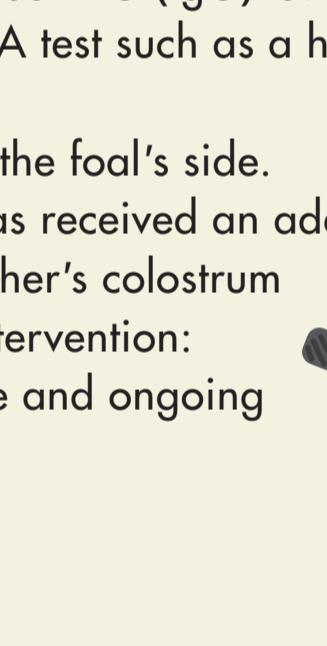
Mare's mammary gland produces her first milk, called colostrum, which is full of antibodies.

antibodies

placenta



### FOAL IS BORN



FOAL STANDS



FOAL NURSES

### 5-8 HOURS after birth

antibodies being passed from mare to foal



1-3 LITERS

This is the period for maximal colostrum absorption. The foal must consume at least 1-3 liters.

Measure the foal's immunoglobulin G (IgG) levels to determine if antibody levels are sufficient. A test such as a hand-held horse-side diagnostic can:

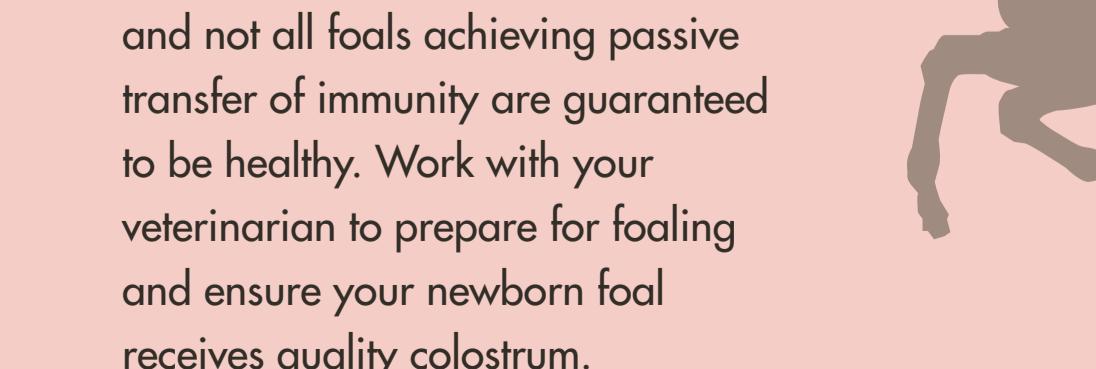
- be used easily right at the foal's side.
- determine if the foal has received an adequate amount of antibodies from its mother's colostrum
- allow for immediate intervention: enables rapid response and ongoing IgG monitoring.



### CAUSES of FPT:

early lactation  
placental infections  
poor-quality colostrum  
unable to stand and suckle  
premature birth  
fescue toxicosis

Foals with FPT need supplemental antibodies via fresh or frozen colostrum (very young foal, less than 18-24 hours old), commercial products, or intravenous plasma.



**Remember:** Not all foals with FPT develop life-threatening infections, and not all foals achieving passive transfer of immunity are guaranteed to be healthy. Work with your veterinarian to prepare for foaling and ensure your newborn foal receives quality colostrum.

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