



## Pre-Purchase Examinations

Purchasing a horse is a big investment in time, money and emotion. Unfortunately, horses seldom come with a money-back guarantee. That's why it is so important to investigate the horse's overall health and condition through a pre-purchase exam conducted by an equine veterinarian. Whether you want a horse as a family pet and pleasure horse, a breeding animal, or a high performance athlete, you stand the best chance of getting one that meets your needs by investing in a pre-purchase exam. The pre-purchase examination is performed at the request of, at the expense of, and for the use of the buyer only.

Pre-purchase examinations can vary greatly, depending on the intended use of the horse. Deciding exactly what should be included in the purchase examination requires good communication between you and your veterinarian. Most pre-purchase examinations begin with a thorough physical examination and observation of the horse in motion. From there, it is important for you to explain your expectations and primary uses for the horse, including short- and long-term goals. Many pre-purchase examinations have an initial set cost for the basic evaluation. From that point on further diagnostics such as radiographs, bloodwork, endoscopic evaluations, breeding soundness evaluations, etc will incur additional costs.

It is very important for the buyer to be present during the pre-purchase exam. The seller or agent should also be present. Prior to arriving for your pre-purchase examination, you may consider printing and asking the seller to fill out the [seller statement form](#). This gives your veterinarian a brief history of any notable events in the horse's past.

The goal of a pre-purchase examination is to provide you with information regarding any existing medical problems and to be a time for your veterinarian to discuss those problems with you so that you can make an informed purchase decision. The veterinarian makes no warranties for the future. A horse is not "passed" or "failed" as what may "fail" a horse for one use may be "passed" for another use. Your veterinarian can advise you about the horse's current physical condition, but cannot predict the future. The decision to buy is yours alone to make. It is important to realize that subtle internal medical and musculoskeletal abnormalities are difficult to diagnose and may go unrecognized on a routine pre-purchase examination. Recurrent colics, tying up, intermittent heaves, epistaxis, pregnancy, impaired vision and subtle transitory lamenesses are some of the occasional conditions missed on these exams.

For more information about pre-purchase exams, go to the AAEP's horse health Web site, [www.myHorseMatters.com](http://www.myHorseMatters.com).

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