

Prepurchase Examinations

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A prepurchase exam is exactly as the name suggests - a veterinary examination of all aspects of a horse's health before buying him. Sellers are usually skeptical, buyers often see it as an extra expense, and veterinary skills or thoroughness can vary. So why do them?

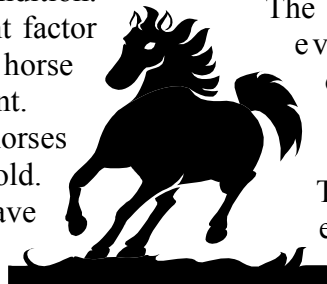
The simplest answer is so that you know what you are buying before you write the check. While other horse professionals may be able to evaluate performance merits, only an equine veterinarian can help determine the horse's overall health and condition. This is a very important factor in deciding whether the horse will be a wise investment.

For example, all horses are not seven years old. Many new owners have been surprised to discover that the "seven year old" they just bought is really nineteen. Many rested horses move just fine until asked to perform or do something a little different, then a subtle lameness becomes apparent. A horse in good condition in mid-summer can become a hard keeper in winter due to a variety of dental problems. And just

because the mare had five foals in the past doesn't mean she will ever foal again. You won't know unless you look.

Horses do not pass or fail a prepurchase examination. Our goal at Countrycare is to give you, the buyer, as much information possible prior to making your decision whether or not to purchase a horse.

So, exactly what information is gained from a thorough exam? Basically everything from the age to breathing problems to possible future lameness concerns. The examination process involves more than just a normal temperature and verifying that the heart is beating.



The entire body is evaluated- by observation, auscultation and/or palpation. This includes eyes, teeth, heart and lungs, etc.

All four legs are palpated, flexed, extended and gaits scrutinized! A complete prepurchase examination will often take up to two hours to complete.

It is also important to evaluate the horse's conformation and disposition. We look at the horse's conformation, body condition and symmetry prior to ever

touching them. Every step, stance and action can be a communication that relates to an underlying problem.

The intended use of a horse is an important consideration. What is relevant for a broodmare is different from the requirements for an eventing horse.

The buyer should be present during the examination so that exam findings can be discussed. Also, special tests may be recommended based on the exam. Additional tests may include x-rays, blood work, endoscopic or ultrasound examinations.

Remember that most horses do not come with a money-back guarantee. The expense of a prepurchase examination is small compared to the long term costs of keeping and caring for him - especially if there are health problems.

Whether you want a family pet, a pleasure horse, a breeding animal or a high performance athlete, you stand the best chance of getting one that will meet your needs by first investing in a prepurchase exam.