

**SOP No:** ATT 047

**SUBJECT:** Abdominocentesis in Horses

**POLICY:** This procedure may only be performed by operators who have been educated in the correct techniques, and under the supervision of their skilled Demonstrator. Leather boots and clean overalls must be worn.

**PRECAUTIONS:** The horse will be placed in a crush and will be suitably restrained by a skilled handler. A nose twitch will be used if additional restraint is required. The person performing the procedure must wear surgical gloves.

**EQUIPMENT:** Halter & lead  
Twitch  
Crush  
Animal Clippers  
Xylazine 100 mg/ml  
Butorphanol 10 mg/ml  
21 – 25 Gauge Needles  
18 Gauge 3.75 cm Needles  
18 Gauge 6 cm Spinal Needle  
2.5 ml syringes  
Alcohol & Hibiclens Swabs

**PROCEDURE:**

1. The horse is sedated with 0.2-0.5 mg/kg of Xylazine  $\pm$  0.02-0.05 mg/kg of Butorphanol (if needed). If additional restraint is required a nose twitch may be applied.
2. An area over the ventral midline (most pendulous region) is clipped and surgically prepared with appropriate skin disinfection.
3. The operator stands alongside the horse at the level of the elbow, facing the rear. An 18 gauge 3.75 cm needle is quickly inserted through the skin into the ventral midline taking care to not over insert the needle. If no fluid is obtained the needle is gradually advanced further by rotation of the needle.
4. If no fluid is obtained, 2-3 additional needles may be placed at slightly different locations until fluid is obtained
5. If the procedure is unsuccessful using 18 gauge 3.75 cm needles (usually in fat animals) then an 18 gauge 6 cm spinal needle may be substituted. Care is taken to only advance the spinal needle until fluid is obtained.
6. Following collection of fluid the needles are removed. If there is any bleeding from the site(s) pressure is applied until bleeding stops.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**DATE ISSUED:** 24.06.2009

**REVISED:**

**REFERENCES:**

1. Rose, R.J. and Hodgson, D.R. Manual of Equine Practice. Second Edition. W.B. Saunders. Philadelphia. 2000.