

Behavioral Problems (According to the Merck Veterinary Manual)

Behavior / Description / Causes :

Aggression:

Biting	Nipping during handling or when in close proximity	Boredom; bad temperament
Charging	Attacks handlers or those in close proximity	Bad temperament; meal time; overly protective of foals; hormone problems in mares
Crowding	Invades handler's personal space	Nervousness; learned avoidance mechanism
Kicking	Lifting hind foot forward and then kicking back in a sideward motion towards an object (not to be confused by just kicking to towards other horses)	Fear; bad temperament; aggressiveness (usually get rid of flies on legs)
Rearing	Striking with front legs while standing on hind legs	Fear or objection to restraint, medication, or other stimuli; harsh bit; learned avoidance mechanism
Striking	Reaches for handler with either or both front feet	Reflex to pain; fear; confinement; bad temperament

Fear:

Halter pulling	Pulls back when tied; panics when cross-tied; doesn't follow handler	Poor training; learned avoidance mechanism; pain
Evading haltering	Runs away when approached; avoids being caught	Fear or mistrust of people; anticipation of bad experience

Performance problems:

Balking	Resists moving forward	Fear; failure to establish clear cues; asking horse to perform beyond its abilities
Bucking	Kicks up hind legs forcefully	Playfulness; desire to unseat rider; frustration from unclear training cues; ill-fitting equipment
Head tossing	Throws up head when grooming exercising, or riding	Tooth infection or medical problem; painful bit pressure; learned avoidance mechanism

Eating problems:

Coprophagia	Eats manure	Normal in foals 2 to 5 weeks old; lack of roughage, minerals or proteins
Cribbing	Bites an object, pulls back flexing neck	Boredom; lack of exercise
Food bolting	Swallows food rapidly without chewing	Excessive hunger; competition for food; learned behavior
Mane and tail Chewing	Chewing on manes and tails of herd mates	Boredom; playfulness; lack of roughage or minerals
Wood chewing	Chews on wood	Lack of roughage, protein, or minerals; boredom

Stall problems:

Digging or pawing	Paws floor	Anticipation of feed; nervousness; lack of exercise
Tail rubbing	Rubs tail against fences or walls	Parasites; habit
Stall walking; stall weaving; stall kicking	Continuous circling, moving, kicking	Boredom; excess energy; aggression