

what we know



Seizures are uncommon in equines, and the causes are not fully understood. Advanced age is the one consistently seen factor

the body associated with that part of the motor cortex. If the seizure becomes more generalised, then more and more muscle groups become affected."

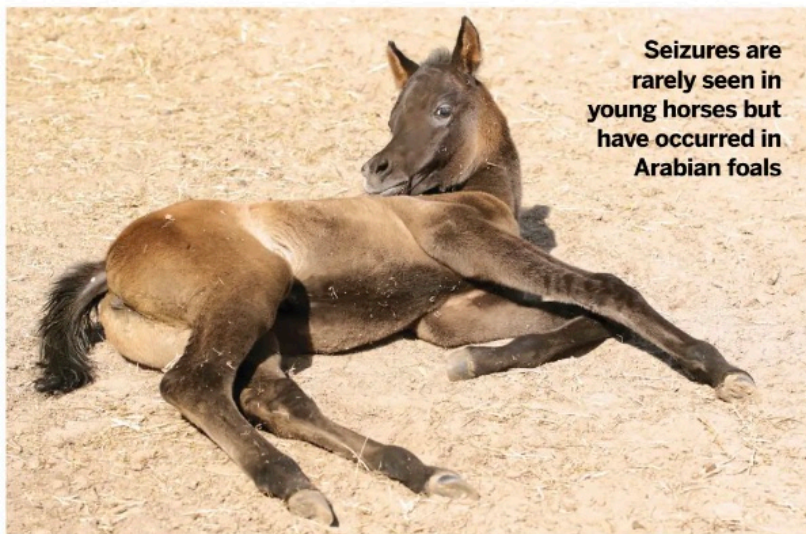
WHAT HAPPENS?

IT'S not uncommon in horses for a seizure to begin in the lip muscles before moving down the neck and then elsewhere, which Richard suggests might

be because they're grazers.

"Regions of the body associated with very fine movements have larger regions of the brain assigned to them, and those regions are more likely to be affected by a seizure than others," he says. "Because horses graze, the muscles that control the lips probably have a large brain area assigned to them."

If the entire motor cortex



Seizures are rarely seen in young horses but have occurred in Arabian foals

The recovery period

ONCE a seizure is over, it can take several hours for the brain to recover.

"After a big seizure, the horse can be depressed, their head might hang low, and they can sometimes be blind," says Richard.

Aftercare in this situation is focused on safety and allowing the horse to rest.

"If the horse is standing quietly out in a field, they're best left alone," he advises. "Move any other horses away and if the horse is close to a fence, it's best to move them away from it as, if they're blind, they might injure themselves. If they're in a stable, again leave them, reduce noise on the yard and wait for them to recover."



Allow a horse to rest and recover after having a seizure

is affected, it results in "status epilepticus", or a severe generalised seizure. In this instance, the horse's behaviour is unmistakable.

"Typically, the horse would display rhythmic contractions of multiple muscle groups,

often at the same time, also rigidity, and usually the horse falls over. It can last two or three minutes or more and is very distressing."

As the horse is not in control of its movements, it's also potentially dangerous.