

# Chronic Grass Sickness Nursing

## Equine Quality of Life Chart

This chart may help you monitor your horse's quality of life whilst you are nursing him/her due to diagnosed chronic grass sickness. It may help you when you have discussions with your veterinary surgeon about continuing to nurse your horse, or if you are considering euthanasia.

If you are nursing your horse at home your veterinary surgeon is unlikely to see the horse daily, but probably is called when you feel your horse is deteriorating, however, because in many cases of chronic grass sickness the horse will not eat consistently, so is likely to have good and bad days, with regard to both feed intake and behaviour, which makes assessment difficult.

By running through this chart and discussing progress with your veterinary surgeon regularly (weekly) it may help you to decide if the horse is improving or deteriorating overall and thus help you and your veterinary surgeon decide on the best course of action for the horse's quality of life. Table 1 is for your completion and Tables 2 and 3 show examples of answers to these questions which may influence your decision to continue nursing or consider euthanasia.

**Table 1:**

**Quality of life form for owner's completion when nursing a Chronic Grass Sickness horse.**

My Horse	Yes	No
1) My horse's temperature has increased to above 38.5 °C (101.5 °F)		
2) My horse is having more difficulty swallowing wet concentrate feeds.		
Dysphagia (difficulty swallowing) Score 0 = no difficulty + = some discomfort seen ++ = marked discomfort and sound made		
3) My horse has thick/coloured nasal discharge and bad smelling breath.		
4) My horse's rhinitis sicca (dry crusty nasal membranes) is becoming worse (e.g., sounds louder when breathing and or large hard crusts forming in the nose and being snorted out).		
Rhinitis Sicca (dry crusty nose) Score 0 = none seen + = some crusts seen ++ = crusts seen snorted out and breathing noisy.		
5) My horse has lost more than 5% of its body weight by day 21 (week 3) of chronic grass sickness disease development.		
6) My horse is having difficult lying down and getting up (because he/she appears weaker).		
7) My horse shows no interest in feed and does not approach me when I have his/her feed.		
8) My horse is feeding less consistently - bucket/concentrate feed.		
9) My horse is feeding less consistently - grass/forage.		
10) My horse is passing less faeces (less than 1 pile in a 24-hour period).		



**Table 2: Example form when time to consider/discuss euthanasia of a Chronic Grass Sickness horse.**

<b>My Horse</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
1) My horse's temperature has increased to above 38.5 °C (101.5 °F).	Y	
2) My horse is having more difficulty swallowing wet concentrate feeds.	Y	
Dysphagia (difficulty swallowing) score 0 = no difficulty + = some discomfort seen ++ = marked discomfort and sound made		++
3) My horse has thick/coloured nasal discharge and bad smelling breath.	Y	
4) My horse's rhinitis sicca (dry crusty nasal membranes) is becoming worse (e.g., sounds louder when breathing and or large hard crusts forming in the nose and being snorted out).	Y	
Rhinitis Sicca (dry crusty nose) Score 0 = none seen + = some crusts seen ++ = crusts seen snorted out and breathing noisy.		++
5) My horse has lost more than 5% of its body weight by day 21 (week 3) of chronic grass sickness disease development.	Y	
6) My horse is having difficult lying down and getting up (because he/she appears weaker).	Y	
7) My horse shows no interest in feed and does not approach me when I have his/her feed.	Y	
8) My horse is feeding less consistently - bucket/concentrate feed.	Y	
9) My horse is feeding less consistently - grass/forage.	Y	
10) My horse is passing less faeces (less than 1 pile in a 24-hour period).	Y	

**Table 3: Example form when nursing could continue with a Chronic Grass Sickness horse.**

<b>My Horse</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
1) My horse's temperature has increased to above 38.5 °C (101.5 °F).		N
2) My horse is having more difficulty swallowing wet concentrate feeds.		N
Dysphagia (Difficulty swallowing) score – circle or highlight 0 = no difficulty + = some discomfort seen ++ = marked discomfort and sound made		+
3) My horse has thick/coloured nasal discharge and bad smelling breath.		N
4) My horse's rhinitis sicca (dry crusty nasal membranes) is becoming worse (e.g., sounds louder when breathing and or large hard crusts forming in the nose and being snorted out).		N
Rhinitis Sicca Score – circle or highlight 0 = none seen + = some crusts seen ++ = crusts seen snorted out and breathing noisy.		+
5) My horse has lost more than 5% of its body weight by day 21 (week 3) of chronic grass sickness disease development.		N
6) My horse is having difficult lying down and getting up (because he/she appears weaker).		N
7) My horse shows no interest in feed and does not approach me when I have his/her feed.		N
8) My horse is feeding less consistently - bucket/concentrate feed.		N
9) My horse is feeding less consistently - grass/forage.		N
10) My horse is passing less faeces (less than 1 pile in a 24 hour period).		N

