
Horse Teeth and Jaws

The horse relies on its teeth to eat, and survive. The front teeth are flat and sharp, and rip the grass they eat in the pasture. The back teeth are the grinder teeth. They are responsible for grinding the vegetation just pulled into the mouth by the front teeth. Often the back grinder teeth will develop sharp edges. These sharp edges may cause the horse discomfort and affect the way and amount the horse will eat. It is important for a Veterinarian to check their teeth every year and file off any sharp edges on the teeth. They do it with a large file.

- **Function of the teeth** – The horse’s upper and lower jaw are basically a mirror image of each other in terms of teeth. Each has six incisor teeth (three on each side). These are the teeth that cut food. In the adult horse there are six premolar and six molar teeth (three of each on each side). These are the teeth that chew food. In the young horse, the back three molars are not present. In male horses, there may be one canine tooth on each side. These have no function.
- **Teeth and the skull** – In order to reduce the weight of its large skull, the horse has three air-filled sinuses on each side. These lie in front of the eyes. The roots of most of the molar teeth extend up into these sinuses.

