

Signs of Health and Disease in Elephants (www.elephantcare.org)

Signs of a healthy elephant

- Constant motion—ears flapping, tail or trunk swinging and swaying
- Eyes clear and bright; a small amount of clear discharge from the conjunctival sac is normal
- Mouth, tongue, and inside of the trunk a rosy pink
- Tip of the trunk moist
- Skin soft and resilient
- Moisture present at the base of the nail
- Neither too fat nor too lean
- Appetite good, appears content
- Well-formed dung, brown in color (color may vary with diet); a normal amount is passed with no evidence of straining
- Urine copious in amount, faintly yellow, with a pleasant odor; no straining during urination

Signs of illness in elephants

- Listless, decreased movement, unusual behavior, exercise intolerance
- Dull or sunken eyes, increased tear flow, thick discharge
- Mucous membranes pale, muddy, bright red, or dry
- Discharge from the trunk, coughing, abnormal respiratory sounds
- Dry skin, loss of elasticity, wounds
- Weight loss, sunken abdomen, prominent ribs (see body condition index)
- Decreased appetite, anorexia
- Change in urine or feces (amount, color); straining
- Lameness
- Obvious pain
- Any unusual swelling or protrusion