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Horse's love it when their owner's understand them.

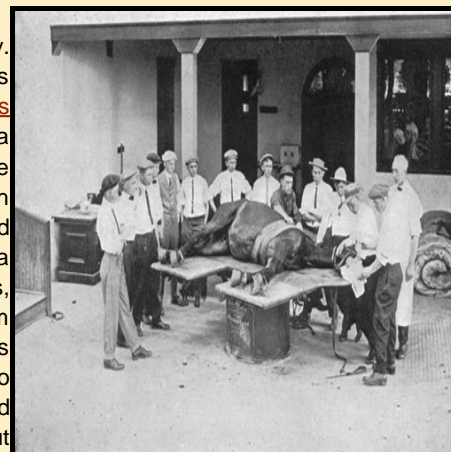
Horsemanship is about the horse teaching you about yourself.

I decided to add this page since my other pages are getting long. I will try and put things related to health and welfare of horses on this page.

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### Vet Care Today:

Knowledge about the horse has come a long way. One of the best large animal Veterinarian schools in the country is at [University of California at Davis \(UCD\)](#). From the days of working on horses on a barrel and plywood, we have now gone to full hospitals with operating rooms, water and pool therapy. If you have a medical question about horses, UCD is the place to be. I am fortunate to be close to this facility where technology his so advanced. For good information and reading about horse medicine, this is place to find it. Remember



\*Photos Rick and Horses

\*Clinics on Request\*

\*Contact Rick



Think Like A Horse  
By: Rick Gore

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knowledge of the horse is the best gift you can give to your horse.

### **Impaction Colic:**

This PDF file has some great information on [Colic In horses](#) and is from the leading Vet Hospital's in California.

The link below is one of the better articles on colic and impaction I have seen. Some time horses that won't pass can be loaded into a trailer, this response will encourage a bowel movement and may help get things going. If I notice a horse is not drinking or has sweated more than normal (foaming or salt marks on hair) I will dip my dry hay in water before feeding. This removes dust and wets the hay, which helps in getting a little more water and not so dry food into the horse.

Impaction link: [Http://www.equestrianlife.com/wiki/Impaction](http://www.equestrianlife.com/wiki/Impaction)

Good Colic Information [Additional Colic Information](#)

I still see lots of confusion on colic and causes. I try and make it simple. Natural care of horses is the best way to prevent colic. Natural means not stalled, not fed twice a day, not forced to drink nasty dirty water, grain and supplements in moderation. The reverse causes colic. The things I see contributing to colic is dirty and nasty infested water that is not cleaned. Fish in water buckets crate nasty water. DO NOT PUT FISH in your water buckets. Keeping blankets or rugs on horses causes them to sweat and raises their body temp that removes moisture and contributes to colic. Feeding dry hay in solid flakes causes horse to swallow clumps and not chewing or digesting food before swallowing. Starving horses all day and only feeding twice a day causes horses to eat fast and gorge their food; this interferes with digestion before swallowing. A produces 12 gallons of saliva a day, when fed only twice a day they produce much less and that contributes to colic.

Natural grazing, feeding loose grass hay all day, called free choice or free access hay is better. This way a horse is closer to it's natural feeding habit, they are starved and can eat a little bit all day called GRAZING, which is what a horse is designed to do. If I fed you once a day you would stuff yourself, you would be really hungry and eat more and eat faster, not good for you and very bad for a horse.

Lots of fresh clean water, loose grass hay, small amounts of grain or supplements (better half amount twice a day than once a day), open areas to move and walk and nibble and graze since exercise helps in digestion. To me it is simple, yet most do just the opposite of what I say here since it is easier and faster for them and their horse has to pay for their laziness.

### **Feeding Grains and Supplements:**

This is a commonly confused area of horse care. Horses do best with varied diets, no big changes, no fast changes, slow is better, no trying to put weight on fast, no trying to take weight off fast, slow and steady. Horses do best on grass hay period. Any other foods fed can be problematic if over done. A horse's stomach is only so big, so has it gets full it empties so more food can be taken in. In the wild, horse are not fed they graze 22 hours a day and eat small amounts of grass. Natural grass has moisture, so water is not as critical since moisture and water being obtained while the horse grazes. Much like humans, if we eat foods high in moisture or water, we do not need as much water, if we eat dry or foods lacking water, we need to drink more water. So feeding horses dry pre cut hay or grass is much drier than fresh natural grass.

So how to grains and supplements fit into this? Most grains are dry. So feeding dry hay, dry grain and making a horse drink dirty water all contributes and raises the chance of colic. That does not make grains bad. I only feed oats/rolled oats, rice bran and small amounts of cracked corn. I DO NOT feed these every day. How often do I feed this, It Depends. My thin horses

get more than my fat horse.

How much do you feed? It depends. I never feed big amounts. It is better to feed on cup three times a day then three cups once or two cups twice a day. The more it is spread out, the better it is for the horse. Always feed grain AFTER HAY. If you feed grain first and feed hay, the stomach fills up with grain, then the hay forces it out of the stomach before digested and it is wasted and increases the chance of colic. So Grain is always fed after hay. This is not done since it takes longer, most people throw out hay and leave and if they feed grain the horse will eat each grain first. Lazy or short cuts are NEVER good for the horse.

I feed grain as a supplement, maybe every three days or every other day if it is cold out or less grass out or if I work the horses more or if they are sick or not feeling well and I think they are fighting an infection. If there is lots of grass in pasture and no other issues, they get grain as a treat maybe twice a week. They only get small amounts, maybe a cup or two. When people try and feed lots or catch up or double the amount or think they are helping, they cause problems.

So here is my basic feed and food care for my horses. Kept in open pasture, NO stalls or locked up. Always have lots of fresh CLEAN water available. A salt block and horse mineral block in pasture in the shade (out of sun) is always available. Carrots and Apples, fiber and moisture foods, whenever I see them. Grain (rice bran, oats, corn) small amounts total amount of all three 2 cups or less, a few times a week unless the horse is healing from injury or sickness or cold or wet or working hard.

The key is NEVER change fast or big, slow changes in diet and grains after hay so the grain is not pushed out of stomach before digestion.

**CAUTION:** Feeding too much grain can cause all kind of problems; feeding too little grain can cause NO problems. Seems pretty simple to me.

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### **Foal Rejection and Stall Vices:**

This is an article from University Of California, Davis, a leading Vet School on horses. It discusses **Equine Behavior - Stall Vices and Foal Rejection.** It is a PDF so it might take a minute to load but worth the read.

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### **Removing Bot Eggs:**

When removing bot eggs off the legs of horses be careful where you do this. The bot egg (The little yellow dots or specks normally on the legs) need to be ingested to produce the worm. So removing these eggs in the grass, in the stall where feeding occurs or over hay helps the eggs get into the horse. This is bad. So when removing or scraping bot eggs off your horse, do it in area where feeding is not an issue. Especially don't do while your horse is eating since the odds are some hay will fall and the horse will eat it along with some bot eggs and your horse gets worms. Bot eggs should be removed to prevent the horse from ingesting the eggs, which will give them worms.

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### **Cryptorchid:**

This may explain why your so called gelding is acting like a stud. **Cryptorchid** is when one or both of a colt's testicles do not drop into the scrotum. So the little rascal is up inside the horse still producing male hormones that create stallion behavior. **The word means: (Crypt = hidden, Orchid = testes).** I got a question from a reader that said she bought a gelding and found out later



it was a stallion. After smiling and shaking my head a bit, I started thinking that maybe she was fooled because of a Cryptorchid. All breeds of horses can have this but it is more common in Quarter Horses, Saddlebred's, Percheron's and ponies. Some testes that have not dropped are still fertile. If both do not drop then they are normally fertile, however if only does not drop then it is normally sterile. Sometime the hidden one will drop when given the anesthetic to cut the one that has dropped off. Some vets can feel or find the undropped testicle and can pull it down when

cutting the one off. So some just have the one gelded and if the other one cannot be found or does not drop then they know the horse may be fertile. Another test can be done to see if the horse is fertile and if he is not, then it does not matter that the horse still has one testicle. However, just because a horse is not fertile does not mean that he will not still think he is a Stud and will still get hormones that could cause Stud like behavior. Why should you care about this? If some backyard Vet does the castration of your colt, he may or may not tell you about this. A castration is easy and can be done locally if both testes have dropped. However, in the case of a Cryptorchid, surgery is normally required. Since this procedure is more expensive, some people may be dishonest (dishonest horse people? - tell me it is not so) and just have the dropped testes cut off and never mention the Cryptorchid. Something to be aware of when you think you have a gelding and he acts like a stallion.

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### Why do horses get Swayed Backs

This can be caused by lots of things such as poor nutrition, lack of exercise, lack of muscle, poor foot care, age, conformation, poor saddle or pad, over weight rider, having lots of babies, being ridden too early before bones are fully grown and developed. I would say most common cause is lack of exercise = lack of muscle and age. Much like older people get bent over, slouched and don't stand as straight or tall as they get older, same concept.

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### Recommended Vaccinations:

**TETANUS TOXOID;** When a wound such as a deep puncture is contaminated, toxins from the anaerobic bacterium *Clostridium tetani*, which thrives in the equine environment, cause lockjaw and general muscle spasms, usually resulting in death. Vaccinate yearly. Give a booster vaccination at the time of penetrating injury or surgery if most recent dose was more than six months earlier. Broodmares should receive a vaccination four to six weeks before foaling.

**RABIES;** Invasion of the central nervous system by a virus that is fatal if untreated; it also transmits to other animals--including humans. Recommended yearly, especially in areas where rabid wildlife is reported or areas considered to be endemic.

**WEST NILE VIRAL ENCEPHALOMYELITIS;** A mosquito-born encephalitis that can be deadly to horses and has been reported in all but a few states. Vaccination recommended very six months.

Two West Nile Virus vaccines are now available; consult your veterinarian about the best choice for your horse. If you're vaccinating your horse against WNV for the first time, he'll require a booster after the initial injection.

**INFLUENZA;** Acute, contagious, viral respiratory-tract inflammation; occurs in isolated

cases or in epidemics. Your veterinarian can recommend which form of the vaccine is suitable for your horse. Intranasal Vaccine every six months; add booster two to four weeks before anticipated exposure, such as a show or a long haul.

Intranasal vaccine gives a good immune response when properly applied but can be tricky to administer. If your horse is fussy about substances sprayed up his nostrils, consider using the injectable form. Injectable Vaccine every six months; add a booster two to four weeks before anticipated exposure.

**RHINOPNEUMONITIS**; Caused by a herpes virus, a contagious infection of the respiratory tract; often induces abortion in pregnant mares. Optional - every six months. Rhinopneumonitis and Influenza vaccines are sometimes administered in a single combined dose. If your mare is bred, consult your veterinarian about a Rhino vaccination schedule to safeguard her pregnancy.

Some Additional Vaccines:

**EE/WEE/VEE**; Eastern Western Venezuelan Equine Encephalomyelitis, aka Sleeping Sickness, is a vector-borne viral disease causing inflammation of the brain and spinal cord. Vaccinate yearly, in spring (before insect season). Where Encephalomyelitis is common and/or where there are two annual mosquito "blooms," give a booster EEE/WEE/VEE vaccination every six months about a month before the onset of the mosquito season.

Strangles (**also equine distemper**) "See below"

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### **Strangles / Vaccines Information Links:**

Here is a good site with information about Strangles. Be aware this company makes the vaccine so they are somewhat bias, however it appears to provide good information:

<http://www.cyberhorse.net.au/csl/strangles.htm>

Additional information on Strangles: [Click Here](#)

This is another link to UC Davis Vet School site with lots of other info on Strangles.

<http://www.vetmed.ucdavis.edu>

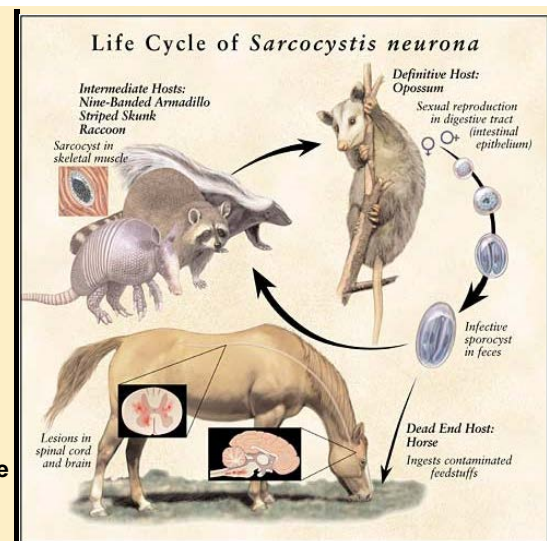
The link below has a good chart for Vaccines, schedules, etc.

<http://www.vetmed.ucdavis.edu/CEH/docs/horsereport/pubs-HR23-1-bkm-sec.pdf>

### **EPM - Opossum Disease:**

Clinical signs are almost always asymmetrical (not the same on both sides of the horse).

- Ataxia (lack of coordination), Spasticity (stiff, stilted movements), abnormal gait or lameness
- Lack of coordination and weakness which worsens when going up or down slopes or when head is elevated - Muscle atrophy, most noticeable along the top line or in the large muscles of the hindquarters, but can sometimes involve the muscles of the face or front limbs



- Paralysis of muscles of the eyes, face or mouth, evident by drooping eyes, ears or lips
- Difficulty swallowing
- Seizures or collapse
- Abnormal sweating
- Loss of sensation along the face, neck or body
- Head tilt with poor balance; horse may assume a splay-footed stance or lean against stall walls for support
- Three things seem to influence progression of the disease: - The extent of the infection (i.e. the number of organisms ingested)
- How long the horse harbors the parasite prior to treatment
- The point(s) in the brain or spinal cord where the organism localizes and the damage occurs.

[Click here to link with more detailed information.](#)

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### **Pigeon Fever:**

This is a common disease in horses and is commonly confused that pigeons carry it or pass it. This is not true, but many believe it. If you read the snake bite section on this page you will see a link to a video where a chest abscess is cut.

**\*\*SEE VIDEO OF AN ABSCESS BEING CUT \*\*WARNING GRAPHIC**

[Click Here to View Abscess Video](#)

Pigeon Fever [Article link](#)

[Pigeon Fever in Horses](#)

[What is Pigeon Fever](#)

[Pigeon Fever PDF](#)

### **Sheath Cleaning & Bean Removal:**

There are some personal cleaning that needs to be done with horses. A gelding or stallion needs to have his sheath cleaned. The sheath is the hole or skin where the penis is pulled back in. You can clean this with just water, but Excalibur is specifically

made for cleaning out your horse's sheath. Some people use Ivory Soap (unscented) and warm water. Using warm water sometimes helps a horse drop or relax so you can have more access to the penis. Another tip is to use an old sock, slide your hand in the sock (like a soft glove) or you can use a latex glove and then just rub and soften up the build up of dirt and other debris in the sheath. Make sure you rinse very well and do not use baby oil or other things to clean this area or you will get swelling and irritation that will require a vet visit. Most horses can do with a cleaning at least twice a year. Depending on the horse may require more, but cleaning when not needed is better than never cleaning. Once a month is way too much, some bacteria is needed up there so too much cleaning is as bad as too little. Watch a video on Sheath Cleaning: [Click Here](#)

Not only is it important to clean the sheath and shaft for debris, it is also necessary to check for a "bean". A bean is Smegma that accumulates and forms a bean looking wax bead. This is normally found around the urethra and has to be searched out. The surrounding pictures will show you what a bean looks like and how to locate it and remove it. When the horse drops you have to roll the skin back from around the urethra and locate the bean, normally on the top area of the urethra. Remember, don't just try and get this the first time. Do lots of desensitizing with your horse and this area. Your horse has to be very comfortable with you digging around and being gentle in this area, so lots of touching and rubbing long before you try for the bean. This is not a fun job but it is required for the health of your horse. The white/yellowish bean is what you will want to remove. In the last, black and white picture show how the urethra is in the center of rolled skin so that is where the bean will be hidden. If you are still unsure, most vets will do this and clean the sheath for a fee when they sedate the horse for teeth floating. NOTE: If you click on the pictures they will take you to other links that explain this.

NOTE: The pictures are on my [Horsemanship Tips Page under Sheath Cleaning](#).

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**Below is an email and picture I got from a reader**



Hey, Mr. Gore. Just wanted to give you a quick thank you for your videos on cleaning a male horse's sheath and finding and removing the bean. (I know, I know, you probably don't get many emails from women thanking you for these particular videos, but I'm sending you one today).

I'm waiting on my round pen :) and am just spending time with my boy, and have been working on desensitizing that area so that I can take proper care of him as per your videos. Had it not been for your teaching, I would have never known that needed to be done.

I got my horse back in April, I am a new horse owner, and haven't been around horses since I was 15 (22 years ago) and had never heard of a "bean" in my life. But I found your Youtube videos and your site and have been trying to learn all that I can. He's my horse, my responsibility, there are things that I'm going to have to take care of, and this

is one of them. (Horse ownership is not for the faint of heart, or the squeamish. There's nothing like poking through fresh horse poo looking for worms, or checking your horse's personal parts for a Smegma ball to make you learn real quick it's not all pink fluffy furry!!)

So, after watching your videos, I did check for the bean, and didn't see anything. But, because I was nervous of hurting him, and because his "degree" of drop had progressed a little too far, I wasn't fully able to look, and just didn't realize it. I've kept trying to work around that area a little at a time because I know I'm going to have to and I want him to be used to me touching him everywhere. (I've even pulled ticks right off his hiney hole--yes, I was afraid of being kicked, but they needed off and he can't do it for himself, so I just worked around his back end, and very carefully and gently took them off--didn't get kicked either).

This morning, I was outside with him (still waiting for that farrier) and he's very relaxed with me and drops all the time - which in my book is a compliment--that he's relaxed with me - so I thought I'll practice looking for the bean, and he'll just be that much more used to his mom being around there. His sheath is in bad need of a cleaning - but I want to just take my time and not freak him out, do not want to get kicked either. So, I rub his belly a little and he begins to drop, I see the urethra and just gently work that area back a little, and oh, my goodness gracious, I SEE THE BEAN. Take my time, do not focus just on that, and in just a minute or two, he let me remove it. I have attached a photo, and in case you can't see it, THAT'S A QUARTER BESIDE THE BEAN. Now, tell me he won't feel better with that gone!!! (I know I'd feel better)

He was a little more relaxed in his drop today (nice and droopy) and I realized that things will move a little more freely than I thought and I saw something. But, I was looking for a little white wax "green bean seed" and this was dark in color (his sheath is dark as well) and for a second I thought it was just what the inside of that area looked like. However, I rolled it back a little farther and caught my breath. It was indeed a bean, and I was appalled at how large it was. I could not remove it on the first try. I tried and he would draw up, so I would back up and just go back to rubbing his back, flanks, hips, and belly, and he would drop again. It took about 3 or 4 tries to get it out, and it was a little more each time, and that's what I want stressed to those women out there.

They may have to check more than once, learn the degrees of drop on their horse (as odd as that sounds) and how that will make a difference when they're checking, they need to know to be patient getting it out, they need to know that they MUST check, I can't imagine how that felt stuck in there all this time. If I can do it, a woman who hasn't been around horses in 22 years, and am such an ignorant beginner that sometimes I feel sorry for my horse, then there's no reason why all the other women horse owners out there who probably consider themselves experts can't spend a little time and get their horse used to being messed with in their personal area and take care of business.

Maybe I'm way off here, but I feel like it absolutely strengthened our relationship and made that trust just a little deeper. He trusted me enough to help him, I trusted that he wouldn't kick me, I know he feels better, he knows I helped him to feel better, and that's a great big horsy pat on the back in my book. Thanks again, had I not seen those videos, I would have never known horses made "beans", and he might have had some physical problems as a result.

So, thank you again, it was pretty gross, and as a mom to 5 little boys, I've seen a lot of gross things, but if it needs done, I want to take care of it, and thank you for showing the way. So, if I can do it, women everywhere need to be checking their horses and getting rid of that bean!! :) Have a great day.

Sincerely, ///END

I sent a thank you note and wanted to post this so maybe others can learn. I can only imagine how many horses have this size of a bean blocking their urine flow and causing pain and discomfort. And I always get asked, who does this in the wild? In the wild there are no geldings and horses breed, I think during the breeding process the bean is either removed or when combined with the female bacteria the bean does not develop. Regardless, it needs to be done for the health of the horse.



This picture shows the hole above the urethra where the bean is inside so it has to be pushed out.



### **Signs of late-stage pregnancy in Mares:**

About 2 weeks before foaling, the mare's belly move from a hanging position to a position that fills out her flank area.

When she has about 1 week to go, you will notice her udder increasing, some mares you won't depending on how many foals they have had.

About 4 days before, the foal would have moved back into the position to be born.

About 24 to 48 hours before birthing, the mare's teats will become waxy. This is to stop the milk from squirting out. As the mare gets closer, the 'caps' will fall off allowing the milk to trickle out.

Before a mare delivers the hips will get very lose and relaxed

The mare may paw, sweat and pin ears more

Other signs are enlarged udders with drops of colostrums (the first milk the foal receives), frequent urination, swelling of the vulva and sweating

### **Floating Teeth:**

What is Horse teeth floating and is it needed?

This is another one of those personal choices. Horses in the wild or who are left out and graze all day do not need this as often as stalled horses that only get fed twice a day. All day grazing gradually files the teeth down so the points do not get as bad as fast. The trend tends to be get them done once a year. I think this is too much unless needed. The problem is some vets will say they need it to get business and others will

be honest, hard to know unless you know first.

Nowadays vets normally give a sedative and do the teeth, called floating or to float the teeth. In the old days you would do your own horse with a file and just grind down the points or tips so the horse can chew better. The tips and points prevent the upper and lower teeth from getting good contact to mash the grass and hay.

If the horse is not showing pain and not losing weight, I say stay out of it. We humans always want to think we have to help the horse too much. Horses that are in pasture and graze all the time may not need floating for several years or until they get older. This floating teeth thing makes people feel better, make vet's a lot of money and are done far too often when not needed. Horses that are stalled and fed twice a day may need it more since it is not natural for horse just to eat twice a day. If it ain't broke, don't fix it. I hear lots of people say "if grain falls out of a horse's mouth then their teeth need floating", Horse Pucky! Horses don't eat grain in the wild, they eat grass, they eat hay, all horses drop grain when they eat it, horse don't close their mouth when they eat and they hang their head down when they eat so gravity makes things fall out of their mouth. A horse's mouth is not made for grain they are made for Hay, grass or long straw food. Ask a retired Vet if horse's need teeth floating every year, they will tell you no, but most people think they do, people feel better and when people want it and are willing to pay for it, the Vet will do it. Never ask a Barber if you need a haircut, don't ask a Farrier if your horse needs shoes, don't ask a trainer if your horse needs training and don't ask a Vet if your horse's teeth need floating. :)

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### **Snakebite:**

If you ride in a area where snakes are plentiful you may want to carry some pieces of cut garden hose with you. If you trailer out a lot and you may want to keep some hose in your trailer tack room in case your horse or someone else's horse gets bit. Horses like dogs normally get bit in the face when investigating a snake. When this area swells, it cuts off the air supply. By inserting some hose into the nostrils, you can save your horse until you get to a vet. Remember a horse can't breathe through their mouth, so if they lose their nose airway they will die. You can secure the hose with duct tape or other medical tape. These are some good links to more info about horse bites:



<http://www.horsesring.com/forums/general-discussions/20748-recommendations-on-rattlesnake-bite-management.html>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VMzvUW6XO-o> (Warning: Don't watch while eating, this show the how much pressure, fluid, infection and heat can build up in a (abscess) from a snake bite)

[http://www.equisearch.com/horses\\_care/health/first\\_aid/snakebite051103/](http://www.equisearch.com/horses_care/health/first_aid/snakebite051103/)

<http://www.horses-and-horse-information.com/articles/0100reptilian.shtml>

[http://www.ehow.com/how\\_2090049\\_treat-snakebite-horse.html](http://www.ehow.com/how_2090049_treat-snakebite-horse.html)

<http://www.whmentors.org/saf/snakes.html>

<http://www.thehorse.com/ViewArticle.aspx?ID=6165>

### **Proud Cut Geldings:**

This is term that refers to a gelding that still acts like or behaves like a Stallion (Stud).

Some of these behaviors can be herding, snaking, mounting mares, chasing or charging other geldings and just a very dominate disposition. Some say this is caused by not having all the testicular tissue removed by the person that gelded the horse. I think it also has to do with how old the horse was when he was gelded. The longer a horse remains a Stud, the more traits he will keep after he is finally cut. Testosterone is produced and this can be an additional factor for this behavior. Some people say this behavior can be caused by an over active adrenal gland. No matter the cause, this is not horse's fault and is all instinctive behavior.

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### **Shipping Fever:**

This refers to sickness that is caused by shipping a horse. This is a respiratory illness that comes from tying the horse's head high and not allowing the horse to lower his head on long trips. If dust or other foreign objects get into the horses airway, a horse needs to be able to lower his head and expel the object. If the head is tied high, he cannot do that. Combine that the stress of travel and being trapped, with long trips, no stops or breaks for the horse and you got yourself a sick horse. Stress is a powerful immune killer. Extended stress suppresses the immune system in horses and humans. Shipping fever (Pleuropneumonia) can be prevented by allowing the horse to be able to lower his head during shipping or while loaded in a trailer, lots of breaks and rest stops and making trips as less stressful as possible. Signs of sickness can be coughing, discharge from the nose, pawing, kicking, fever, sweating and loss of appetite and no water intake.

\*\* Here is a good health link for horses:[www.myhorsematters.com](http://www.myhorsematters.com)

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### **Rain Rot:**

Help your horse's hair dry faster. Fluff the wet hair by rubbing against the grain. This will cause it to air dry and help it dry faster. It will also help prevent rain rot or rain scald. Rot happens when



the hair stays wet too long and never dries. If there is a break in the rain, brush the hair to remove mud and distribute natural oils. Most horses stay dry under their belly, so a dry brush should be used there first, so you don't wet it and



chill the horse. If you use your hands to rub and fluff all the hair you will decrease drying time and increase air exposure to the hair. This will also allow the hair to dry deep in the winter fur and help prevent rot and help your horse to stay warmer if the temp drops. I have heard that using Listerine on the rot will help it clear up, I have not confirmed this, but have heard this from several people. The photo to the right is some severe rain rot, the photo to the left is more common, more of a hair loss. Using a blow dryer works well and sacks the horse out to noise and warm wind. This is just one more thing that the horse will learn not to be fearful of and it will warm him, dry his coat and help prevent rot. Mud scald or mud fever is like this as well, here is a good link for treatment of Mud Fever: [Click Here](#)

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**[Why Does a Horse Lower Lip Quiver, Hang or Wiggle:](#)**

Lots of talk and opinions on this topic but little scientific proof or study, I will try to shed some light on this.

Sometime a horse's lower lip will quiver, shiver, hang, flap or tremor. Like many things with horses, when a horse does something, you need to look at what other things going on around the horse when the behavior happens. Some say this lip behavior happens when a horse is nervous or uneasy. Others say this is when a horse is relaxed and comfortable. Some say they see it in horses sleeping in pasture, in older horses, stalled horses or in bitted horses. Some time it happens when you are scratching a horse in their favorite place and they extend their neck and the lip will tremble or wiggle. Sometime a horse will wiggle the lower lip if food is caught between the gum and lip.

My experience is it seems more common in older horses. When looking at horse behaviors over time, I try to find commonalities with the behavior. Therefore, the things I see with this behavior are older horses, stalled horses and horse with years of bit use. Now most know that I am anti bit, I think bits do damage to gums, teeth, nerves and are bad for horses. So my bias may cause me to connect this behavior, but I cannot remember a horse doing this that had not been ridden with a bit, had not been older and had not been stalled.

Depending on activity, it could be one thing or it could be related to many things. It could be stress, a stall vice, a nervous response, bit damage, stress, age or relaxation.

Depending on what causes the behavior or what combination of things causes it may help understand it. Could it be that older horses relax faster and have learned not to stress so much since they have learned to deal with things better? Could it be a minor not so obvious stall vice that a horse uses as a coping mechanism? Could it be just a droopy lip from sleeping or being relaxed? Could it be years of nerve and bit damage causing the quiver? Like many things in horses, "It Depends".

And there is a distinct possibility that it could mean different things for different horses. Many horse behaviors can have dual meanings. One that comes to mind is a cocked hind leg. That can mean a horse is relaxed or it can mean it is about to kick. A horse passing gas is a sign of relaxation if it occurs when a horse is being groomed, massaged, or relaxed. However, when you load a horse into a trailer or put pressure on a horse it is common for them get nervous, poop and or pass gas.

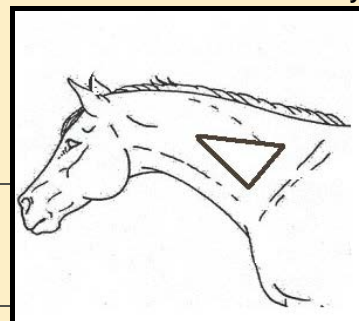
So if you horses does this, it could be for a varied of reasons depending on what else is going on at the time, the frequency of the behavior, how long it last, what starts it and what stops it. This, like so many other things in horses, is not a clear defined answer. This is why when a know it all horse person always want to run up and give a definite fix, answer or absolute definition of what you horse is doing, this only shows their ignorance and arrogance and that should be a flag in your critical eye.

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### **Intramuscular Injection:**

How and where injections in the neck must be given. The correct place is important to avoid important structures such as arteries, vertebra and nerves. A method to identify this area is to:

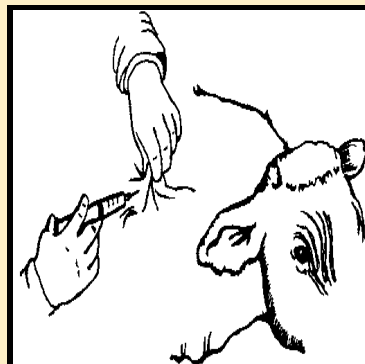
1. Place your hand flat on the horse's neck just behind the halter
2. Slide your hand down the neck towards the shoulder blade
3. Stop when you reach the front of the shoulder blade
4. Spread apart your index finger from your middle finger



5. Between your fingers is a good place to give the injection.

The injection should be given in the last 1/3 of the neck, in the middle 1/3, halfway between the top of the mane and the bottom of the neck. A triangle is created by the front of the shoulder, the bottom of the crest and the top of the vertebrae. (See diagram) See this video on how to give injections: [Click Here for How to Give an IM Shot](#)

**Subcutaneous Injection:**



This means injecting under the skin. It is done by picking up a loose fold of skin from the neck or shoulder. Take care not to inject into your fingers or that you push the needle in so much that it comes out on the other side of the skin fold.

[Move to top of page ↑](#)

**Colic Help:**

If you think your horse is suffering from colic and can't poop, you can try and load the horse into a trailer. Most horses instinctively poop when nervous or scared, putting them into a trailer may trigger this response and cause a movement. Keeping or getting the internals for a horse working helps with colic.

**Euthanasia:**

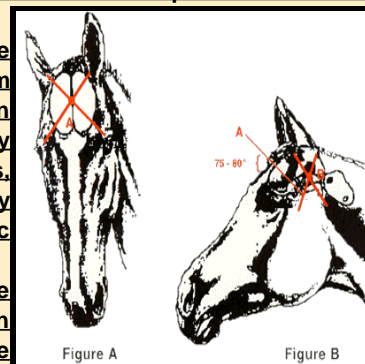


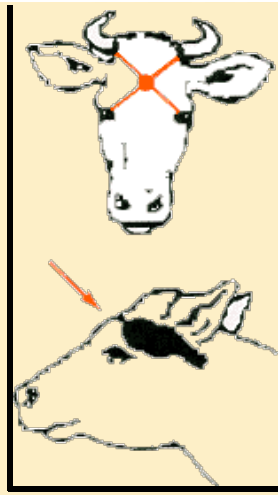
A horse with fatal injuries or terminal illness may require euthanasia for humane reasons. The humane killing of a horse is best performed by a lethal injection by a veterinarian.

In the back country, there may not be such an option and humane destruction by gunshot is necessary.

The appropriate site for shooting a horse is at the intersection of lines drawn from the eyes to the base of the ears. When possible, the horse should be euthanized as far away as possible from water, trails, or campsites and preferably out of sight for aesthetic reason.

The carcass may have to be dismantled to relocate it in an appropriate area. A large caliber gun/bullet should be used to prevent multiple shots and prolonged suffering.





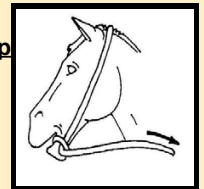
### **What's a War Bridle:**

I put this here since this can be used to control some horses when dealing with medical issues.

This is a way to control a horse when no bridle or bit is available or if you want to use a



bitless bridle. If your headstall ever breaks or gets torn off by a tree branch or fence or if you ever end up face to face with a horse lose horse, this is a good way to gain control over a horse. It can also be used for a little extra control if a horse is hurt or needs medical attention. It can be very harsh so I do not recommend it to anyone that is too rough



or relies on force too much. The Indians (native Americans) would ride in these **bridles** for extra control. This bridle can also be used to lay down a horse in a crisis. Here is a good video of how a variation of the **war bridle** can be used.



### **Twitching:**

Although I am not a fan of this, since like a lot things, if done appropriately, can be helpful and when abused do more damage. So I post this with mixed emotions. I can only hope that if you are reading my site, you are trying to learn more about horses and will not abuse them. Twitching strangely enough lowers the heart rate during an unpleasant procedure. A twitched horse's heart rate increases 8%. Horses not twitched during an unpleasant procedure experience a heart rate increase of 22%. The experts say that twitching causes an endorphin release that makes unpleasant experiences less stressful. In Australia, for example, the handlers who load horses into racing stalls used to be allowed a twitch, but that was outlawed some years ago. In fact, most Aussie's think Americans are barbaric for still using this procedure. I stress the phrase, when done or used appropriately. Done properly, twitching can defuse what could be a dangerous situation for a horse. The physical aspect of a twitch is to stimulate the body to release endorphins. This is kind of like giving the horse opium (it gets them stoned or buzzed). It is a powerful relaxant and occurs naturally. One theory is some predators know this and use this to their benefit. When lions grab a zebra, one usually latches onto the nose. That isn't to shut off the air (that's done by the one at the throat),

but to release endorphins. It is a natural preparation for death. A twitch has to be controlled, which means it has to be able to be released and tightened as the situation develops. The most common twitches are neck, ear, nose and gum line. The neck twitch is done with the hand and is used to simulate a horse bite. You will see a mommy horse disciplining their young by biting and holding them by the neck area. I have also seen older geldings do this to other horses to teach them. This neck grab will sometime calm a horse and distract him enough that you can mess with an injury or give a shot. The ear twitch is not good or effective and I think, tends to cause a horse to be ear shy. The nose twitch seems to be the one of choice and it can be applied with the hand, rope or chain. Obviously, I don't like the stupid chain idea, but somewhere, a brilliant horse idiot came up with this revelation and decided that if a hand or rope worked then a chain would work better. "NEWS FLASH" - Chains and horses are BAD! So back to the hand, by squeezing the nose endorphins are released and the horse is relaxed and preoccupied with you squeezing his nose, so he is less likely to react to you cleaning an injury or giving him a shot. The gum line seems to be used by Farriers mostly. It may work but once again, there is a propensity for abuse or over use. A twitch is a last resort before using a tranquilizer or other drug. It should not be the first (easy) choice and should be used by EXCEPTION and not routine. (IMHO)

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### **Stomach Ulcers:**

I get a few questions on Stomach Ulcers. I think the best thing we can do to prevent ulcers is to keep a horse in an environment that is close to their natural living conditions. Ensuring constant forage and or grass hay is always available. This keeps the horse's system constantly moving and working. Pasture is best, but if stalled this helps as well. Horses are NOT designed to eat like humans. However, many people treat their horse like they would like and normally this is not good for the horse. They are not human, they are a horse. In pasture or by keeping food always available (free choice/free access), the horse's stomach is never empty. Since it is believed that stomach acids produce ulcers, by keeping food moving through the stomach, this does not allow acid to build up or stay in the stomach alone. Of course reducing stress by not keeping the horse alone, blindfolded (fly masks), caged (stalled), uncomfortable (blanketed, hot and sweaty), pampered (over grained/fed sweet feed), also helps.

I like to feed a little before Trailering and immediately after I arrive. This gets something in the horse's stomach for the trip, which can be stressful and fearful. Then by feeding after I unload, I get the system moving and working again to remove any extra acids produced by the trailer trip. I do NOT feed while trailering. A trailer is stuffy and or windy, this blows hay and dust which gets in the horse's eyes and respiratory system, this can make a trip more harmful and more stressful. The same goes for shaving. The problem is most people never ride in their trailer to see how hard it is on the horse. Test it yourself, throw some hay and shavings in the trailer and get in and stand where you horse would be. Have someone take a short trip on a highway, you will be surprised and your horse will thank you.

### **Proper Horse Weight:**

Here is a good link with pictures and explanation about what to look for in a horse that is too thin and too fat. [Click here to see proper weight of horses.](#)

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### **Supplements and Horse Feed:**

Here I am going to talk about good and bad and my opinion about different things I have seen given to horses. I will discuss each topic and then share what I think is good or bad about it. With all feed, moderation and small amounts over a longer period of

time is best for the horse. You never want a horse to be stuffed, full or fed a lot of any one thing, expect maybe grass hay. The slow way is the fast way with horse, this is very true when it comes to putting weight back on a horse that is underweight.

Hay: Grass hay is best (rye, oat, orchard, grass, timothy, fescue). Alfalfa is not grass hay, but can be good in moderation and not as a primary feed. Alfalfa and Clover are classified as legumes. The more variety of hay you give horses - the better. Changing hay should be done slowly. That means don't feed alfalfa for a week and then the next day feed oat for few days and then feed rye for a week and then back to alfalfa. This is too drastic of a change for the horse's system. It is better to feed a little of each hay or if you are going to switch from one type to another, do it over a few days, so you would slowly add a little new hay each day and then slowly feed less of the old hay each day, until the switch is made. Throwing some carrots or apples in the hay is a nice way for the horse to find treats while eating the hay. Again, moderation, not an entire bag of carrots or an entire bag of apples, a little is better than a lot.

Beet Pulp: Is sugar beets that has had the sugar removed. It his high in fiber and works good for horses. However, feeding large amounts is NOT good for many reasons. Small amounts 3 times a day is much better than one large amount once a day. Make sure you soak it 15 minutes before feeding. It absorbs water and swells up, so you don't want this happening in the gut. Here is some good info on [Click here for info on Beet Pulp for Horse.](#)

Cracked corn: Good supplement in small amounts, a half cup once or twice a day is plenty. Too much corn is not good and has too many starches. Some say corn is not good at all for horses and can sour in the gut, but in small amounts I think it is fine and healthy for the horse. Horses have been eating corn for many years.

Sweet Feed: This is ok for a treat but not for food. Too many people feed this as a grain supplement, this is not good, it has too much sugar and fillers. Horses like it but it is not that good for them. So small amounts are ok for a treat only, but not as a food source.

Are Apples seeds Poisonous? This is another myth out there. Apples are NOT going to hurt a horse unless you are feeding them two or three cups of just apple seeds. It takes one cup of apple seeds to poison a human, so unless you are feeding your horse just cups of seeds, it is nothing to worry about. So even if you feed your horse an entire tree of apples, you would still not get enough seeds to hurt them. As for Crabapples some horses eat them, some don't, they don't appear to be bad and I have not seen a horse die after eating one.

Probiotics: Again in moderation. Lots of people out there want to over do things with horse. Less is more in most all things with horses. Too much of anything is not good for the horse. There is some stuff called "ProBios" that is a paste and comes in a tube. It's Probiotics. I have heard it works well for a horse that gets a belly ache or mild colic. Keeping some in the trailer is not a bad idea, just pay attention to the expiration date.

Calming gels or Calming supplements: Not good and they are over used and they do not work for what they are used for. Horses are active and need exercise to move, play and run. Keeping a horse locked up and then calling it hyper or over active is foolish and then these same fools will give calming aide and think they are doing good. These are cheats, they set you and the horse up to fail, do not give them and beware of those that use them, for they do not know what they are doing.

Bute: This is a pain killer anti-inflammatory and should be used very rarely. This drug is way over used and given to horses way too much. Since this blocks pain, a horse does not know that it should not run since it does not feel the pain. Pain is good for the horse to know to slow down and do less. When Bute is used too much it sets the horse up to fail and allows the horse to do more damage and prevents healing. So like many things in horses, the things people try and prevent, they end up causing. Giving Bute too often is hard on the horses stomach and can cause bleeding of the stomach, yet many people give this to horses like candy and wrongly think they are helping the horse.

Salt or Mineral Block: This should be a must for a horse to have access to anytime they



want. This provides needed minerals for the horse to stay healthy. Without it many other issues can occur. Ensure your horse always has access to a salt, selenium and mineral block to promote good health and a good immune system. Some horses will lick dirt or eat tree bark to supplement their diet. All normal horse behavior and should not be alarming. A lot of horse feed is low in sodium and chloride so having a salt block available is good for the horse. Make sure you use blocks that are made for Horses NOT cattle.

#### DANGER - Never feed Cattle feed to Horses

Rice Bran: This is one of my favorites. Good fiber, low in sugar, low in carbohydrates and packed with vitamins. Like all things, moderation, small amounts twice or three times a day. Remember this is given as a supplement, not as a primary food source. If I could give my horse only one thing other than hay, it would be rice bran or oats.

Apples, Carrots, Watermelon: All good natural food sources and horses love them. All have sugar so feeding them all the time is not good, moderation as a treat. My guys get one most every day, watermelons mainly in the summer. Some horses eat the rind, some don't. I just throw a whole melon in the pasture and let them bust it open and eat what they want. The seeds will not hurt them. Again, you would not feed all three all day as a food, only feed as a treat or supplement in moderation.

Sugar cubes, Peppermints, Candy: I don't care what you hear this is not good for your horse. It is processed sugar and sticks to teeth. It will rot teeth and cause dental issues. Do not feed them to horses and don't allow other to feed them. Yes horses eat them and they like them, but they are NOT good for horses.

Beer or other Carbonated Drinks: Same as above - not good, can cause colic, unnatural, rot teeth and NOT good for the horse. Do not feed any of these to horses.

[I have another article on Is Beer Good for Horse and Should You give your Horse Beer.](#)

Old lettuce or Vegetables: NO - if you won't eat it, don't give it to horses and this is not natural food that horses would find if grazing. It is not made for a horse and should NOT be fed to horses.

Corn Oil: Another over used supplement that is NOT good for horses. Corn Oil is high in omega 6, which is pro-inflammatory. So although many will say it will make the coat shiny and puts on weight fast (fast is always bad with hoses), it is over used and you will see people putting as much as 2 or 3 cups on the food, that is absolutely foolish. A small amount like a tablespoon is much less likely to do damage, but two cups would be like me giving you a cup of vitamin C tablets each day. Trying to use this cheat to put on weight on a horse fast is NOT good for the horse.

Oats or Rolled Oats: This is a good safe supplement for horses. It is good for the horse and will not hurt the horse. It puts on weight, gives energy, digests well and does not have any bad side effects. Some will say it makes a horse hot. These are the same people that will give a horse "calming" supplements, they are scared of their horse, they are not horsemen and they look for gimmicks to compensate for their lack of riding or handling ability. They are everywhere so watch for the gimmick horse people, they thrive at barns.

Cribbing Confused: Cribbing is very different from eating or licking bark or dirt. Some trees my horses will strip every bit of bark off, unfortunately it kills the tree so that is not good. Some trees I will break branches off and my horses eat the leaves, branches, and others they will only eat the leaves. This is not cribbing. I have heard people call this cribbing when they see a horse eating bark or chewing on a tree. Bark and leaves is a natural supplement that horses instinctively eat sometime.

Cooked Oat meal: This is a good warm feed when cold, once or twice a week would be fine, you could mix some flax seed or fiber in, again not big servings, better to give a cup or two in morning and a cup or two at night, than to give 3 or 4 cups at one feeding. Less is more, not a lot, so a cup cooked not a cup dry and then cooked.

Free Choice Hay: This is a feeding method that is best for horses and simulates grazing and continuous feeding. Free Choice or free access is having hay available for the horse at all hours. This eliminates the need to feed twice a day and prevents a horse from getting so hungry that he eats fast and does not chew or digest his food. Keeping hay available at all times allows a horse to eat slow and graze throughout the day. Remember a horse only sleeps about two hours a day, that leaves a lot of awake time for grazing, eating and occupying time, so this will also decrease the chance that your horse will develop cribbing or other harmful vices.

Shots Boost Immunity for Health: Get your horse seen by a vet at least once a year, preferably twice a year for their shots. This helps keep a horse's immune system working and helps build up immunities for other issues. This also gives a vet a chance to find or notice other issues with your horse.

Fresh Clean Water: Last but probably most important is fresh clean water. I can't mention this enough. This is the easiest thing to do and seems to be the most neglected thing that is not maintained. Fill the water bucket every day, forget those auto-fillers, they will break and make you lazy. Check the water every day and clean at least once a week. By seeing the water everyday you can tell how much your horses drink, you will find dead animals that have drown in the water buckets, you will spend time in the area and may notice other issues. When cleaning the buckets each week use Bleach, I discuss this on my [Horseman Tips page](#).

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#### What should a horse's Poop look like?

Like most horses questions, It depends. You have to see the horse poop daily to establish a normal look or what is normal. Too runny is not good and too dry is not good. A good rule of thumb is it should be in balls and should be moist enough to break open when it hits the ground. If the balls don't break when they hit the ground, then maybe the horse is not drinking enough, could be a little dehydrated or could be running a temperature or have something else going on. If it is too runny, the horse is losing too much water so something else like virus may be going on or the horse could have just changed diet, could be nervous or stressed, might have ate some rich grass that contains a lot of moisture or something else. Most all horse poop in horse trailers are runny - why?

I think the key is knowing what is normal and being aware of changes. That could be changes in environment, changes in new horses or new stresses, changes in feed, working conditions, weather conditions, diet, recent worming medicine, recent shots or immunizations, loss of buddy horse or other friend, etc. Many things can cause a change in your horse's fecal consistency. Making sure it is temporary and knowing when it changes and then connecting it too what may have caused it, will help you stay on top it and know when you need to get a Vet involved or let it run it's course. Obviously any blood, worms or foreign material is cause for concern.

You always want to make sure the horse has a good supply of fresh clean water, grass hay and a salt and mineral block for nutrients and then monitor changes in behavior, temperature, disposition, signs of discomfort or changes and then maybe connect those changes to the change in poop. So I hope you can see a trend in all horse questions that may seem simple but in reality has many variables and it always comes back to It Depends?

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#### GARLIC - Good or Bad for Horses:

I am not a fan of too much of anything. I don't like people taking shortcuts to get benefits with horses. Unless some thing is made for horses and has proven positive

results and NO negative benefits or risk, then I don't promote it or use it. When asked if you should feed garlic to horses, my first response is do they eat it in the wild? Do they have access to it in the wild? If the answer is NO then my gut is NO.

There appears to be lots of research and evidence on WHY NOT to feed garlic to horses and very little other than feelings or beliefs on why to do it. I DO NOT feed my horses garlic. I have attached some links below and took some excerpts from each link to hopefully educate you to make an informed decision. To me, if you feed garlic you are taking an unnecessary risk and putting your horse's health in jeopardy.

### Don't Feed Garlic to Horses

There is evidence to suggest that garlic can be harmful to your horse, specifically that it causes hemolytic anemia, anemia which results when red blood cells rupture.

### Equisearch Horse Care

The toxic element in allium (a family of plants including both garlic and onions) is well known to be a chemical called N-propyl disulfide. By altering an enzyme present within the red blood cell, it depletes the cell of a chemical known as phosphate dehydrogenase (PD), whose job is to protect the cell from natural oxidative damage. "Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association," the toxic dose in horses turned out to be considerably less than the 5 grams per kilogram of body weight reported in cows. Until these suspicions are investigated and repudiated, how much risk are you willing to take?

### Equi Therapy Net

However feed with care as it is being discovered that there are dangers in feeding too much garlic as it can cause anemia in horses. There is a toxic element in Garlic called N-propyl disulfide which can change an enzyme within a horse's red blood cells, it depletes the cell of a chemical known as phosphate dehydrogenase - whose task is to protect the blood cells from damage caused by oxidation

### All About Horse Health

Paradoxically, garlic in its pure form can't be deemed completely safe. It's possible that the herbs suspected antimicrobial proper-ties may with long-term use damage the beneficial hindgut bacteria vital to a horse's digestive system. This could allow unfavorable bacteria to flourish, creating imbalances in the digestibility of forage and in the overall health of the gastrointestinal tract.

### Way of the Horse

It's up to the horse owner to decide if she wants to try garlic. But my horse has enough problems without giving her something that could cause harm and has no scientific research to prove its value.

### Animal Education

By the end of the 71-day supplementation period, horses offered garlic developed signs of heinz body anemia, as characterized by the presence of heinz bodies in their red blood cells, decreased red blood cell count, hemoglobin, and increased billirubin.

### Horse Herbs

Care needs to be taken in feeding garlic to horses as too much garlic may cause aneamia. Do not use garlic if a horse has been scouring chronically, and use caution if you are feeding garlic to nursing mares as it may flavour/taint the milk and upset the foal's digestive system.

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### Poison Information: Horse Report Poisons

Here is a good link to research if you suspect your horse has been poisoned.

### Should you feed Yogurt for horses? Good or bad?

First, I am not an expert on a horse's digestive system. I am a common sense guy. If it sounds too good to be true, then it probably is. If it sounds unreasonable or stupid then it probably is.

A horse eats grass, a vegetarian, so feeding a horse meat, meat by-products or any form of something that does not grow in the wild and anything that would not be a normal part of a wild horse's diet, is foolish to me.

With that said, I can hear the wheels turning in your heads. Let me say it, well Rick what about wormers or shots or grain, they don't have that in the wild and I hear you say you give that to your horse. Feeding rolled oats or oats is simply parts of Oat hay, so oats is a natural food. Wormers and shots are medicine or preventive health care that has been tested and proven to extend the horse's life. You can still find some that say don't give shots and don't worm, so it is still a choice, but the data is over-whelming that it does more good than harm. If the facts or data changes then some people may also change their position.

As for this high protein, special work horse feed, or show quality grain, or all these special supplements for better coats, better hooves, better muscles, better whatever, too much of anything is NOT good.

NOTE: Horse Behavior Problems should NEVER be fixed with food, grain, supplements or medicine. However, some behavior can be caused by over feeding, over graining, over supplementing and over medicating. It that is confusing, tough, not everything is black or white or has a easy perfect answer, get over it.

I cover this in other places, but I will say it again. Less is more with horses. Less help from humans, less food, less supplements, less sugars, less grain, less medicine, less trying to save the horse, less trying to train the horse, less horse riding gear, less pain devices, no shoes, no bits. I could on but I think I have made my point, if not, stop reading and leave now you are not smart enough to keep up with me.

If you are still here and still wondering what I am going to say about feeding Yogurt to horses, let me try and be clear, I think it is stupid to feed Yogurt to horses. I cannot find any supportable data that supports how this helps a horse. There are lots of people that feel it helps, that want to think it helps and want to justify why it should help, but I do not decide my horse care by wants, feelings or love.

I have put some information that I have found that supports my belief. What I found from my research confirmed my initial gut reaction when I heard that this new trend, which I guess is somehow cool to be in a click at barns so everyone jumps on the stupid wagon without thinking or researching something, before they make their horse a test subject for their ignorance. So read on to see some of the information I used to come to my position and then do what you want.

(I found the following on the internet but forget to copy web address, so if anyone finds a copy/use issue let me know)

-- In essence, yogurt has its place (provided it has the "live culture" as noted above). However, its benefit to horses is limited. LAB (lactobacillus acidophilus) is found in the gut of horses, but when there is digestive upset, generally, the problem is related to acidosis. The gut pH turns acidic and the only bacteria that flourishes in that environment is LAB. The LAB takes over, prevents other beneficial bacteria from re-colonizing and you get things like chronic diarrhea, bouts of colic, weight loss or even chronic laminitis. The goal of any good "probiotic" should be to help maintain and rebalance as much of the gut bacteria as possible. With that said, if a horse has been on a course of antibiotics, de-wormed or had other chemicals/drugs that might have been used to "kill things" in the gut, essentially all or the majority of bacteria may have been killed off. At that point, LAB seems beneficial as there are little to none left and replenishing any of the bacteria is better than doing nothing.

-- The primary source of gut bacteria is the environment....for foals it is the mother's excrement and or the mare's licking of the foal's mouth area. For adult horses, it takes an entire day of grazing to maintain the bacterial colonies. So, any horse that is not on pasture most of the day, most likely will benefit from a daily dose of Probiotics (actually referred to as "prebiotics"). For helping to reintroduce bacteria a "probiotic" (products that contain 1-3 species of gut bacteria) is beneficial in short-term doses.

-- While it was once considered that any probiotic...including yogurt...was beneficial in all cases, this mode of thought has been proven wrong in the last 4-5 years and is/should no longer be recommended. Probiotics are the better choice for maintaining a healthy horse. There's specific Probiotics for a horse, although expensive but actually designed for them.

- I'd rather give my horses a course or Proxetin than fiddle around with yogurt.

- There may be some acidophilus in fermented milk products such as yogurt and kefir. However, most commercial yogurts are made with Lactobacillus bulgaricus or Streptococcus thermophilus. Although these two organisms possess some health benefits, they will not colonize in your intestines. On the other hand, the highest quality supplements are made with "super strains" of Lactobacillus acidophilus. These strains are designed for maximum clinical effectiveness. They also do not die as easily and are more likely to survive the digestive process in your stomach. So if you are looking for positive results, an acidophilus supplement is a better choice than yogurt. Most Yogurt contain sugars and sweeteners, sweetening agents and sugars can destroy beneficial bacteria, so that is another reason Yogurt is not a good choice.

*The following article has some good detailed information that is worth reading:*

Veterinary Topics: Pros and cons of Probiotics

Posted: Saturday, January 29, 2005

Pastes and powders are designed to help horse's intestinal bacterial environment MANY EQUINE issues and problems can be more easily understood if we simply look at the horse differently.

If you think of a horse not as a model of athletic ability composed of muscle, bone, and tendons but as a giant fermentation vat on four legs, you can better understand colic, laminitis, colitis, and many other problems that relate to the bacteria that reside inside a horse. In a healthy state, the horse is host to billions of bacteria of differing types and functions. There is a constant war between various bacteria competing for raw food materials (grain and fiber), and the horse is constantly cleaning up after all its organisms by chemically altering and removing toxins from its body. For example, recent research by Chris Pollitt, BVSc., Ph.D., at the University of Queensland School of Veterinary Medicine in Australia has shown that ingestion of pasture grass in certain environmental conditions leads to excess fructan production in the gut of horses. Fructan is a specific type of carbohydrate derivative. This substance is selectively fermented by the bacterium, Streptococcus bovis. Large amounts of fructan result in a very rapid and very large increase in the number of S. bovis organisms. These bacteria produce massive quantities of toxin-specific proteins, which normally are used to break down the capsule of starches, but in large quantities damage the intestinal lining of the horse. These toxins, called proteases, leak through the inflamed intestinal walls into the horse's general circulation. Toxins in the blood, or endotoxemia, cause damage to the blood vessels of the hoof, which leads to laminitis. This example of laminitis and many other equine disease conditions are similar because they all start with microorganisms. Simply put, when it comes to many diseases and problems in the horse, it is all about bacteria.

Developed for beneficial environment

In normal, healthy situations, the various bacteria in the "fermentation vat" that is the horse are in an equalized state and exist in harmony. The horse receives a re-supply of bacteria from its environment through grazing, and so-called good and bad bacteria live in balance. Horses under stress, however, are at risk of having an upset balance to

their bacteria and are at greater risk for bacterial toxin-related illnesses.

Probiotics have been developed in an attempt to help the body re-establish a balanced intestinal bacterial environment (microflora). They are marketed as either pastes or powders and are commonly given to young foals, horses being trailered or in competition, and horses in many other situations. These products are commonly defined as live microbial feed supplements, and they have been available for nearly a century.

Their name was coined to counterbalance the term antibiotic. It was felt that there were good and bad bacteria and that antibiotics were used to kill bad bacteria, while probiotics were taken to maintain and help good bacteria. Early forms of probiotics, such as fermented milk products, that were consumed by members of certain nationalities were linked to the increased longevity often seen in those cultures or geographic regions.

The key feature of probiotics is they exert health benefits beyond their inherent nutritional value, but, even though they have been used for years, exactly how they work remains unclear.

#### Use is specific

J. Scott Weese, D.V.M., D.V.Sc., an internist at the Ontario Veterinary College at the University of Guelph, has lectured on the use and misuse of probiotics. Weese acknowledges there remains much to be learned about how and why probiotics work, and he points to this lack of step-by-step physiological understanding as a reason for the wariness and slow acceptance of probiotic use among the scientific community.

"Part of the reason that probiotic treatment is approached with skepticism," wrote Weese, "is that the mechanism of action is not fully understood."

This lack of scientific certainty about probiotics has led to wide-ranging marketing claims and unrealistic promotional material. Many companies produce probiotic products that contain inappropriate bacteria or inadequate numbers of bacteria to be effective. This can lead to treatment failure and dissatisfaction with probiotics among horse owners and trainers. "Probiotics are specific tools, not cure-alls," said Weese, but they do have their place in the spectrum of medical treatment. Just as the right antibiotic must be used for the right condition, probiotics should be used in a similar manner.

#### Intestinal benefits

Many conditions in horses can and do benefit from probiotic use. They include diarrheal diseases caused by bacterial action, which are specifically responsive to probiotic use.

Speakers at the 2004 American Association of Equine Practitioners Convention in Denver reviewed human research, which showed that microbial cultures given to severely ill patients via stomach tube resulted in encouraging improvements in those individuals. Colitis (inflammation of the colon) in horses caused by Clostridia bacteria or by Salmonella organisms can be helped by probiotic use as part of a comprehensive and aggressive treatment plan. Probiotics have been advocated for the treatment and prevention of diarrhea in young foals and have been especially effective against rotaviral infections. Some types of probiotics have been shown to influence antigen transport in the small intestine of humans. Antigens are the active particles that cause the body to recognize things as foreign to the system and to react against them. Because some probiotics react with antigens in the intestine, some researchers feel these products might be useful in the treatment of food allergies and that probiotic use might reduce cases of colic, ulceration, and malabsorption.

Young and aged horses might benefit from probiotic use because their intestinal tracts usually are not functioning at peak efficiency. Foals lack a fully balanced level of bacteria in their systems and thus cannot completely and effectively digest food. Aged horses often have intestinal scarring or other conditions that make it difficult for them to digest and absorb their food. Many feed companies have recognized this, and most

diets designed for elderly horses contain probiotics and bacterial growth enhancers.

#### Yogurt example

Horses that are being treated with antibiotics and horses with chronic diseases also are candidates for probiotic therapy. Antibiotics destroy certain bacteria and often allow for an overgrowth of other remaining bacteria. Colitis can occur as the remaining bacteria produce enough toxins to irritate and damage the intestinal lining. The use of probiotics helps promote good bacteria that can compete with and possibly outgrow bad bacteria and limit the amount of toxins produced. An example of using probiotics is giving yogurt or fermented milk to sick or stressed horses, a common practice among trainers and veterinarians for years. As we have come to learn, however, only certain strains of bacteria in certain numbers are effective.

"Common yogurt products," wrote Weese, "contain strains of bacteria which have no demonstrable probiotic effects, and actual research on the benefit of yogurt use has been disappointing." Many old-school horsemen would disagree; there are many stories of horses saved by the administration of fermented milk and similar concoctions.

Since researchers still do not know exactly how or why these products work, it might, in fact, be difficult to measure the intrinsic ways that probiotics help horses. More research is clearly needed, but there is enough science and enough historical lore to justify the continued use of probiotics. Keeping the right mix of bacteria makes for a balanced fermentation vat and for a healthier horse.

*Kenneth L. Marcella, D.V.M., is a practicing veterinarian in Canton, Georgia.*

Ok, that is my take on Yogurt, when people start guessing or trying or experimenting with their horse's health, as usually, the horse pays for stupid owners. I try and put out information so horse's get a better a life. Agree or disagree, but at least know that your choices and decisions can make your horse pay, so don't take that responsibility lightly.

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#### Should You Feed Horses Grass Clippings?

This seems so simple to me and the short answer is a big fat, "NO." However, for those who are familiar with all the problems and issues with this, it may seem perfectly normal to think horses eat grass and all grass is the same.

There are lots of issues and problems with feeding or allowing a horse to eat grass clippings, so I will give you my SHORT list why I DO NOT recommend this:

When grass is cut it starts to ferment, rot, decompose or change chemically.

Some yard grasses are toxic to horses.

Lawns may have fertilizer and weed treatments (sprays) that are toxic to horses.

Grass that is decomposing can cause gas buildup in a horse and cause colic.

Grass is cut in summer and heat speeds up the decomposing process.

Clippings are small so horses eat them faster so they can ball up and choke a horse.

As organic material like grass sits, it becomes a host for growth of mold.

Fresh cut grass can start the build up of Clostridium botulinum, bacterium for botulism.

Moist grass breaks down carbohydrates and can start growth of toxic organisms.

As carbohydrates break down, molds and bacteria begin to rapidly multiply.

Decomposing organic compounds in grass allow bacteria and molds to flourish.

Mowers can get grease, mold and other bacteria on the grass as they cut.

In hot moist summer weather mold develops in clippings in only a few hours.

Decomposing grass can form botulism toxin, which when eaten can cause botulism.

Grass makes Silage and that changes PH in a horse's stomach, causing colic.

Eating decomposing or fermenting grass can cause colic, gas and other problems.

Lawn grass is higher in sugar than pasture grass, NOT good for horses.

Toxins rapidly multiply in a horse's gut and they can be lethal.

Changing a horse's diet abruptly will upset the digestive system.

**Lawn clippings dramatically upset the balance of microbes in the hindgut.  
Lawn clippings can cause or start Laminitis - which leads to all kinds of problems.**

**So, on the surface it may seem reasonable or normal to feed horses grass. Upon closer look, I hope you can see that nothing is easy with horses and the choices WE make can help or hurt our beloved friends. A horse's system is designed for slow grazing all day with a constant supply of proper grass. Consistency in feeding is healthy for horses, so changing their diet arbitrarily is NOT good for the horse. Remember a horse only sleeps about two hours a day, so they have 22 hours a day to graze, look for food, keep their mind occupied, walk, exercise, explore and carefully choose what they eat. When humans decide for the horse and remove those options and choices, the horse suffers.**

**Note: Consistency of diet refers to consistent types of foods, pasture grass, rye grass or oat grass, when changing from one grass to another; you want to do it gradually and slowly, not abruptly at one feeding. All changes in diet should be done as slowly as possible in order to give time for the horse's digestive system to adjust.**

**After reading the above list, I would hope you are convinced that feeding horses lawn clippings is a bad idea and will most likely harm or kill your horse.**

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**I have put a link to a good article on this if you want more information and have copied the article in case the link goes bad. Read it below or [Click Here](#)**

**Reprint courtesy of Kentucky Equine Research, Inc.  
Contact KER's Australian office at [www.ker.com](http://www.ker.com).**

#### **Lawn clippings dangerous fare for horses**

**Chances are good that you've already revved up the lawnmower this season and have begun cutting your lawn. If you're like countless other amateur landscapers, your mind wanders from topic to topic as you're pushing or riding the mower to and from.**

**If you're a horse owner, you've probably asked yourself this question as cut grass shoots from beneath the mower deck: Why can't I rake up these lawn clippings and give the horses a treat?**

**Yours is a familiar question, but what's the best answer?**

**To answer it properly, you must think about your horse's diet and the decisions you make for him daily as well as the decisions of those whom you trust with his health.**

**If you do this, the answer to your question will quickly become apparent.**

**For the sake of consistency**

**One of the tenets of feeding management is consistency - both in feed type and times of feeding. The horse's digestive system adapts to a certain diet and does amazingly well on whatever limited menu he is offered daily, be it primarily pasture and a vitamin/mineral supplement or a full-fledged ration intended for an intensely worked athlete.**

**Any abrupt change in the diet can upset the delicacy of the digestive tract, throwing the entire system into chaos and possibly causing colic or founder.**

**"Feeding lawn clippings will dramatically upset the balance of microbes in the hindgut, potentially leading to colic or laminitis," said Larry**



Lawrence, Ph.D., a nutritionist with Kentucky Equine Research (KER).

"The amount of highly fermentable carbohydrates in regularly clipped lawns is dangerously high.

Excessive intake results in a high rate of fermentation in the hindgut. Accelerated hindgut fermentation can produce increased amounts of volatile fatty acids, which, as their name implies, are quite acidic," continued Lawrence.

"In addition to volatile fatty acids, a surplus of lactic acid will be produced. Lactic acid is not utilized or absorbed well in the hindgut. This increased concentration of acids brings about a condition called acidosis that lowers the pH of the hindgut.

"The acidic environment created by fermentation of grass clippings in the hindgut causes microbes to die, releasing into the bloodstream endotoxins that can cause laminitis," said Lawrence.

Problems too risky to chance

Another aspect often overlooked by well-meaning horse owners is how lawn clippings will affect individual horses with certain quirks or conditions. When a horse grazes, he must go through the motions of selecting, ripping, and thoroughly chewing grass.

When a pile of lawn clippings is placed in front of him, the horse can consume the cut grass much more quickly than if he were grazing naturally. If your horse has a tendency to bolt his feed (eat it very quickly), he may do the same with lawn clippings.

When insufficiently chewed and gulped too quickly, a bolus of clippings can become lodged in his throat, and a condition called choke may ensue. Choke is serious and usually requires the intervention of a veterinarian for resolution.

Lawn clippings might be thoroughly unsuitable for a horse that suffers from a pulmonary disease such as heaves. Dry clippings can be dusty, triggering a reaction that leads to respiratory distress. Reactions may be severe enough to warrant veterinary attention or a break from regular work.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, damp clippings could provide the perfect environment for mould and bacterial growth. Consumption of moldy grass could cause colic or diarrhea.

Not always the same - lawn grasses and pasture grasses

A final factor worth consideration is chemical exposure. As horse owners, we implicitly trust grain farmers, hay growers, and pasture specialists to make informed choices about the growing conditions for their products, especially when it comes to fertilizers, pesticides, and other chemicals that might be necessary to ensure bountiful crops.

Manufacturers of lawn-care products are probably not as concerned with the effects of such chemicals on horses.

Fertilizers and weed-control products intended for lawns might not prove detrimental in small quantities (it's not unusual to see owners hand-grazing their horse in their front yard), but to overload the system with large amounts might indeed be harmful.

The potential problems associated with feeding lawn clippings far outweigh the benefits. Certainly, there's nothing wrong with offering

your four-legged friend a treat, but it's safest to stick to the usual gustatory delights such as carrots and apples.

Without knowing for sure how a horse will react to lawn clippings, it's best to avoid feeding them altogether.

Lawn clippings: causing a commotion

Walter Clayman felt generous that fateful day in late midsummer. Having just finished up mowing an overgrown lawn, he began the laborious chore of raking the long rows of clumped-up grass.

He picked up bushels of cut grass from the yard, and without a suitable disposal place nearby, he threw the grass over the split-rail fence and into the hungry mouths of his two aged quarter horse geldings.

Needless to say, the horses, already downright plump, were in hog-heaven. Walter thought the idea brilliant - efficient cleanup of the yard as well as overjoyed, well-fed horses.

He had grave second thoughts, however, the next morning when his gray gelding, the one he called Blanco, was profoundly lame. The old gelding could barely walk and his front hooves felt significantly warmer than his hind hooves.

Baffled by the sudden onset of what was sure to be diagnosed as laminitis, Walter called his veterinarian. Quick assessment and action by the veterinarian allowed Blanco to recover from this bout of laminitis without detriment to his leisurely days that would lie in his future.

But what brought this on?

Questioning by the veterinarian eventually revealed the culprit: grass clippings. The two geldings, the veterinarian discovered, were familiar with their barren surroundings, namely a dry lot that was necessary to keep the two from becoming obese.

Ample mid-quality hay and a well-formulated vitamin and mineral supplement rounded out the diet.

The grass clippings represented a sudden shift in the geldings' diet.

While the other gelding seemed unfazed by the event, Blanco became seriously ill.

Despite similarities in age and breed, the geldings' metabolic makeup kept one safe while the other's life hung in the balance.

Be Careful of Yew

Yews are evergreen trees and shrubs characterized by flat, needlelike leaves.

In spring and summer, plants produce fleshy pinkish-red berries. More likely than not, one of your neighbors has spiffed up his yard by including these easy-to-grow ornamental shrubs in his landscaping.

In a forest, yews grow tall, commonly 20 to 40 feet, but in the controlled setting of a yard or garden, they are often subjected to severe trimming and end up looking more like a hedge than a tree.

Yew is considered one of the most poisonous plants in the world due to the many natural toxins found in it, the most potent of which is taxine.

Researchers believe that horses need only ingest a small amount (one half to one pound) of yew to succumb to its toxicity.

There is no effective treatment for yew poisoning. Therefore, trimmings from yew plants should never be fed to horses, nor should horses have access to shrubs or trees.

For those horse owners that festoon their fence lines and barns with evergreen wreaths, be sure horses do not have access to those crafted from yew leaves, both during the holiday season and after disposal.

If you're uncertain if a tree or shrub in your barnyard or pasture is a yew, have an expert identify it. If it proves to be a yew, take whatever measures are necessary to remove it from the premises.

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[A pretty good site on Horse Nutrition:](#)

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[Move to top of page ↑](#)

The difference between young liars and old thieves is just a matter of time. -- An ounce of doing is worth a pound of talk. -- Some fellows have more wishbone than backbone.

Rick Gore Horsemanship