



NEWSLETTER

Summer 2007

Welcome



Let me first start by wishing all our readers, customers and friends a very happy festive season and best wishes for a wonderful new year. It certainly has been an "interesting" year and as always a short one.

A very special thank you to all our article contributors because without them sharing their knowledge with us there would be no newsletter. We know it takes a lot of work to put together the articles each quarter and appreciate the effort they go to.

Thank you also to all the readers who have sent in their stories and photos, and also those who have sent us new ideas and special requests for articles. Make sure you keep the requests and ideas coming in the new year. If there are any horse care professionals out there who are keen to share some new treatments or information with our readers please feel free to send us an article and we'll do our best to include it in one of our issues.

It is with sadness that we say goodbye to Jean Koek, our resident thermal imagining and Bowen therapy expert. Retirement is now forefront in her mind with a great many travel adventures with her husband planned already. Jean's articles have always been popular and I am sure that they will be missed.

This edition we welcome Massage therapist, Michele Jalland to the article team. She will be sharing details on massage and how important it can be for the general wellbeing of your horse so if you have wondered just what equine massage is all about then be sure to give her article a good read.

Clinics

Please note that with the continuing uncertainty surrounding events in the early part of 2008 in SE QLD, we have decided to postpone all clinics until the latter part of the year.

If you are interested in attending a clinic with Carlos Tabernaberi (gentle horse training), Carola Adolf (bare hoof workshops) or Catherine Bird (aromatherapy workshop) please register your interest by emailing us at info@nobitbridles.com and we will send out full information and registration forms as soon as dates are confirmed.

Herb Corner

HORSERADISH (*Armoracia rusticana/Cochlearia armoracia*) Known as a popular condiment, horseradish has a number of healing properties. It is valuable, both internally and externally, for stimulating circulation, and its 'hot' properties also contribute to expelling worms and stimulating the digestion by increasing appetite and gastric secretions. The flavonoids it contains are antioxidant. It is an internal antiseptic – most notably for the respiratory and urinary systems. Also used for its diuretic properties (i.e. its ability to promote an increase in urine flow).

Externally it has been used as a poultice (sometimes in combination with other ingredients) to reduce tumours and swellings.

ACTIONS include: strong circulatory stimulant; antibiotic; diuretic; diaphoretic (encouraging sweating); anthelmintic; stimulating of stomach secretions; laxative.

CAUTION: Introduce this strongly stimulating herb *gradually* - too much horseradish can irritate the gastrointestinal tract or the skin (if applied too long as a poultice). Horseradish should be avoided in cases of low thyroid function.

HORSETAIL (*Equisetum arvense*) A member of a very primitive family of plants, much of the therapeutic value of horsetail is due to its high silica content (silica plays an important role in the regeneration of connective tissue). Horsetail also contains many other minerals

including potassium, phosphorous, iron, manganese, calcium, magnesium and selenium. It is considered valuable for the strengthening and repair of bones, as well as being used in the treatment of rheumatic and arthritic complaints. Externally it functions as a clotting agent to staunch the bloodflow from wounds and when taken internally is reputedly effective for nosebleeds and to reduce the coughing up of blood, as well as for deep-seated lung damage.



Horsetail is strongly diuretic (increasing urinary output) as well as being healing and tonic for the urinary mucous membranes, and is therefore used in a number of urinary disorders such as cystitis and urethritis.

ACTIONS include: astringent, stops bleeding, diuretic, anti-inflammatory, tissue healer, restorative to damaged pulmonary (lung) tissue, antibiotic.

CAUTION: Horsetail breaks down vitamin B₁ (thiamine) and should only be taken in conjunction with B vitamin supplementation and under professional guidance. It should not be taken simultaneously with diuretic drugs.

SLIPPERY ELM BARK POWDER (*Ulmus fulva/rubra*)

The finely powdered inner bark of the Red Elm tree, native to North America, has been used by indigenous people for many years and is now employed by both herbal and orthodox medicines. Slippery elm bark powder is pale pink-brown in colour and its distinctive mucilaginous (slimy and slippery) texture, when mixed with moisture, sees it applied to conditions where mucous membranes are irritated/inflamed. This includes membranes of the respiratory and urinary systems as well as the entire gastro-intestinal tract, including the throat and oesophagus.

For horses, slippery elm bark powder is most commonly used internally, to treat conditions such as scouring (diarrhoea) and gastric ulceration and as aftercare in some types of colic cases. It soothes and coats injured and inflamed tissues, helping them to heal and reducing the likelihood of scarring, as well as drawing out toxins and irritants. It can be added to a moist chaff/grain feed or combined with plain yoghurt (with live cultures) and/or honey, mashed banana or mashed pumpkin, and added to feed or syringed into the mouth.

Externally, the bark powder is used for poulticing wounds/injuries. Depending on the situation, it can be used by itself or combined with other herbs, and when it is moistened its soft, sticky, malleable consistency is helpful for moulding and applying poultices in difficult to bandage areas.

Slippery elm bark powder is widely acknowledged as safe and effective and can be used on horses of all ages, from foals to the aged. Follow recommended dosage rates and do not administer it simultaneously with other medications as its mucilaginous texture can interfere with their absorption.

ACTIONS include: demulcent and emollient (soothing and protecting membranes/surfaces), mildly astringent (having a binding or contracting effect on mucous membranes), nutritive.

For more information on these herbs and many others please contact either **Ruth Walsh on 07 5596 4387** or **Carol Dawson on 02 6238 1135** at Country Park Animal Herbs.

Please remember, this information is provided solely for educational and informational purposes including as a potential guideline to using herbs. This information is not meant to be a substitute for the advice from your own vet. You should always consult with your vet professional before trying to treat any illness, we strongly urge that if your animal is injured or sick please contact your vet. We also recommend that when using herbs you consult with a qualified Herbalist such as Catherine Bird.



www.countrypark.com.au

Caroline's Corner

Rugs from a CranioSacral Therapy (CST) Perspective

I have seen quite a few horses of late that are wearing rugs that don't fit as well as they should. This in turn can lead to a host of secondary problems. While I am not going to get into the "to rug or not to rug" argument, I do have some suggestions from the CST point of view if you do choose to rug your horse.

A light cotton can do as much potential harm long term as a heavy canvas, if fitted badly. A lot of people seem to have the impression that while a heavy canvas has to fit due to weight, because a cotton summer sheet is so light it won't affect the horse in the same way. Wrong!

There are many different types and cuts/fits of rugs these days. One size or type does not fit all. One 6 foot 3" rug may fit a thoroughbred but not my quarter horse gelding properly, and visa versa. If you can, try several different makes out before you make your decision (I'm aware with EI this may not currently be an option). I have had clients buy or borrow several \$10.00 second hand patched rugs to try on their horse to see which fits before buying their rug, and the horse has benefited.

Now to one of my main problems I see with rugs (I have been known to be quite evangelical on this one ☺). Hind leg straps. They need to be loose!! So many people have them tight so that they hold the rug in place. If you need to do that, your rug doesn't fit. Get another, or have belly straps like you see on some of the higher quality brand rugs for example. Hind leg straps should be loose enough that they don't restrict the horse in ANY way when it is moving at a trot or a canter, not just a walk or standing still in the paddock grazing. At least 80% of the horses I see are compromised in the back end in some way. This will be exacerbated by a rug that doesn't fit or has tight leg straps. Think how long each day (and night) the horse wears the rug. Every time that horse takes a step the tissues are restricted in some way by the leg straps. Over time, the compromise pattern that builds up from this will affect the horse's action.

Same for taking rugs on and off. Try dropping a strap and metal clip and letting it bang against your shin. Hurts, doesn't it. Yet 90% of people I see do this to their horse daily. Not all clips are metal I know, but even plastic ones can hurt on a windy day. When you unclip a strap, hold it, unthread it if necessary, then clip it back onto the rug then do the other side. Your horse may not move, but they still tense their muscles waiting for the bang. Over time, this creates another muscle tension pattern you don't want your horse to have.

Ditto when putting rugs on. So many people throw them on with the leg straps just dangling. You may be careful, but sooner or later they will knock your horse, and there is very little tissue covering the bone in that area - it hurts! It is so easy to avoid the whole problem by having the straps done up when you put the rug on, then unclipping them when the rug is on the horse.

Added to this, is the fact that many horses I see don't just have one rug on, but 2 or even 3 in winter and you can start to see the sort of muscle tension patterns that can develop. For horses with severe hind leg issues I often suggest a rug that has no leg straps, only belly straps and the cord that runs from one side of the rug at the back to the other and passes under the tail. It continually surprises me how much of a difference such a rug can make.

Similar sorts of problems can develop with the front of the rug too. Aside from rugs that rub on the wither causing obvious (and painful) problems with a whole bunch of secondary potential problems, chest straps done up too tight can be an issue. When you do up your chest strap, it should be loose enough that it does not restrict the horse's movement WHEN IT IS GRAZING. So many people check the strap when they put it on, when the horse has its head up. Most horses spend the majority of their time with their heads down, not up, as they eat. Restrictions in this area can also lead to a host of problems. Keep in mind that one of the most obvious areas this will affect is the thoracic inlet of your horse. The thoracic inlet is where the lymphatic system (the garbage disposal system of the body if you like) drains into. Any animal with a compromised thoracic inlet also will have compromised lymphatic drainage. Not what

you want for your best buddy. Again, if your horse has two or three rugs on, you need to check not only the top rug, but also the inner ones as well.



People are becoming well aware of the damage a poor fitting saddle can do. A rug may not be as obvious, but has the potential to create unwanted muscle tension patterns in your horse if it does not fit well. Keep in mind that your horse wears a saddle for usually a couple of hours at most per day. Many horses are rugged 24/7, which gives them much more time for these things to develop.

Having said that, rugs can and do prevent a host of other problems I see regularly. I choose to rug my own horses. I am certainly not anti-rugging, I simply want people to be aware of the importance of the fit of something your best buddy wears every day, and how easy and simple it is to prevent a host of problems a lot of people are not even aware of.

Warm Regards
Caroline Pope
Animal Communicator & Craniosacral Therapist

www.caroline-pope.com

Carola's Column

Never loose sight of the big picture...

.....or the kaleidoscope of life

© by Carola Adolf NEP/fSHP

Research and science is important to help us understand how the body works.

Where horses and hoofcare is concerned however, we have to be careful not to loose sight of the big picture, because if we start to separate the cell from the tissue and the tissue from the organ and the organ from the organism and the organism from the individual, plus ignore what is known as "life-force", we don't see anything at all.

Science is defined as "a branch of knowledge based on objectivity and involving observation and experimentation".

We barehoof advocates often get asked to provide "scientific evidence" for the claim that a natural hoof is healthier for the horse than a shod one. When will we get scientific evidence to prove that nail on shoes are good for the horse, let alone NOT doing harm?

The holistic barehoof care philosophy is based on scientific knowledge as well as anecdotal evidence and in-field experience plus a huge big healthy dose of common sense.

Since the barehoof philosophies are still seen as "alternative", let's have a look which branches of science actually back up our "natural" and unconventional ways of understanding the healthy bare hoof and the care it requires:

There is Biology - the study of all living things.

Zoology is part of biology. The study of horses is called "Hippology", which in turn is part of Zoology.

Hippology involves the study of horses and their origin, evolution, distribution and behavior.

Here are just some examples and facts we have collected for this branch of science (and there are many more!):

- Horses are prey animals
- Horses are herd animals
- 70% of natural behavior consists of movement
- Hoof horn production and wear are in physiological harmony
- Horses have no day and night rhythm like we do

Herd animals snoozing: Rest when safe!



Good hoofcare must consider the lifestyle and nature of the horse. A stabled horse has a compromised lifestyle. Why? Because our knowledge of hippology informs us that horses are not cave dwellers, they don't have a night/ day rhythm and they need freedom of movement 24/7 as well as the safety of a herd!

Knowing and respecting the many aspects of Hippology will help us to keep horses healthy and will equip us with the knowledge to provide the optimal conditions to help them return to health, including hoof health.

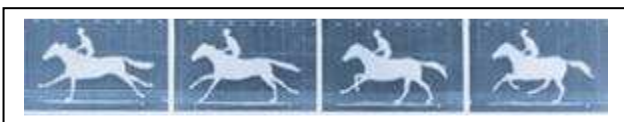
Another discipline of Biology is the science of **Histology**. Histology is the study of living cells and living tissue on microscopic level. One of the basic facts we learn from this branch of science is that living cells and tissues need regular circulation to receive nutrients and oxygen. We conclude that anything that would restrict or obstruct circulation to any part of the living tissue of the hoof, will be harmful.

Obstruction of hoofmechanism which plays an important role in providing for blood perfusion, for example, would therefore cause harm (note: Perfusion is the flow of fluid, usually blood, through the vessels of an organ to supply nutrients and oxygen). Shoeing, incorrect trimming, dehydration, inappropriate too soft terrain and lack of movement will be some of the reasons why there could be a lack of hoofmechanism.

Hoofmechanism (or also called "hoof function") is the alternate:

- expanding of the hoof walls from mid-toe with a simultaneous descent of the solar arch when the hoof is loaded; and
- a return to a contracted state when unloaded.

This should be happening to various degrees, depending on impact velocity (gait and weight) and terrain conditions - and with every step the horse makes.



Histology also teaches us that cells and tissues require a certain metabolic temperature. High fever can cause delirium and if prolonged can even lead to organ failure! Hypothermia on the other side of the spectrum, can lead to tissue damage as well.

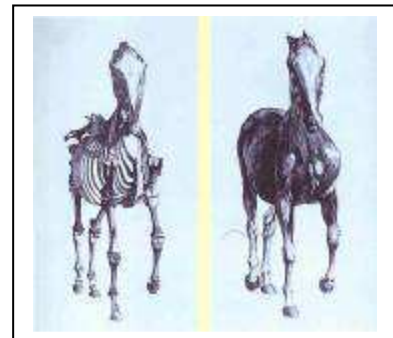
It is interesting that the metabolic temperature range required for optimal function is only very narrow. A few degrees above or below this ideal can lead to permanent tissue damage and necrosis!

On that note, remember that metal has thermo conductivity. Hoof nails can come very close to living tissue and it is not surprising when we find changes in the cell metabolism of the coria nearest to a nail!

Another fact we learn from the science of Histology is that nerves can only function in an environment with active metabolism (for which healthy circulation is essential – see above). We can conclude that impaired circulation to any part of the hoof will lead to impaired nerve function – in other words "numbness".

Any hoof form that causes a restriction of blood flow to any area of the internal hoof structures will cause impaired cell metabolism (and cell division) and impaired nerve function. A so called "gravel cruncher" may be a gravel cruncher by default.

The next Biology discipline we look at is **Anatomy**.



Anatomy is the study of the structure of the body and the interrelationship of its parts. Some of the points we consider in regard to hoofcare and physiologically appropriate trimming are (to name just a few):

- The coffin bone of an equine must be ground parallel when fully loaded - for equal weight and stress distribution on lamellar suspension structures, coronary bulge and digital sling.
- The coffin joint must be over the centre of the coffin bone.
- The tendons of the extensor and flexor apparatus must be in an energy neutral balance when the horse is at rest, so no muscle energy is needed to stand. (This is also called the "Standing apparatus" which allows the horse to sleep while standing up without falling over!)
- We also learn that tendons are shortened via muscle contraction to produce movement.

- We know that continuous muscle contraction (or tonus) will result in cramping.
- When a horse needs to compensate for pain in the feet, it may use muscle strength to merely stay on its feet and we will most likely have to prescribe some alternative therapy such as myofunctional treatment, acupuncture, biophotonic therapy or other complimentary therapies to help the musculature to regain normal function and comfort.

The next biological discipline we are interested in is **Physiology**, which is the study of the mechanical, physical and biochemical functions of living organisms. Just to mention a few important areas covered by physiology are that in the equine leg, blood is literally pumped upwards and returned to the heart with the help of functioning hooves and resulting stimulation, causing the expression of the various venous plexus' in the hoof. It is important to understand that this is only possible with movement.

We also learn that excretion of hoof horn is directly linked to the amount of circulation, which in turn depends on the amount of movement.

It is very interesting that the production of hoof horn is necessary to relieve blood and body metabolism. This plays an important role in the research of laminitis and founder.

My least favourite scientific disciplines are **Physics** and **Mathematics**. Physics and math is the science of matter and energy and their interaction and the study of quantity, structure, space and change.

If we look at the hoof as a geometrical object, we would find that it is an open ended, slanted truncated cone. All forces and dimensions can be calculated with the help of the formula of Pythagoras!

However, what we should be interested in is that a pumping action (hoofmechanism) is only possible with the alternating flattening and concaving of hoof sole. It is just not possible with the fixation of the solar vault. (A thick sole that is filling the entire solar dome makes the structure too ridged to yield to internal weight when loading = impaired hoofmechanism.)

The evidence of **Non-academic observation** and countless case studies and success stories of rehabilitated horses around the world by modern and well educated hoof care practitioners as well as horse owners gives us a pretty solid "leg to stand on" when it comes to providing evidence of the advantages of barehoof care.

To complete the picture - and especially as hoofcare practitioners who deal with pathologies, we must also pay attention to the "energy" of each and every case. Holistic hoofcare practise includes Body, Hoof and Spirit..... Bare(hoof) with me..... I am leaving conventional science now..... But remember, everything affects everything else and we can not separate the cell from the individual and its life force.

I usually work with severe pathologies and very sick animals, but I have long learned that knowing the science behind the pathologies and the techniques I need to master to trim and help some of them, is only a small part of what has an effect on the outcome. Helping an animal to heal its body takes so much more than just knowing about anatomy and function.

Besides the fact that everything effects everything else in the body, and often a whole arsenal of alternative and conventional treatment methods are essential to establish the homeostasis for healing, I believe – no, I KNOW, that an optimistic attitude can by far be a better remedy than many of the conventional drugs!

I call it the "healing energy" that provides the life force which can make the difference between a successful rehabilitation and an individual that just can not get better under the same external circumstances. I have seen horses losing their battle to hoof and metabolic related illnesses that should have "made it" but their life force was suppressed by one thing or another and a rehabilitation was sabotaged by negative expectations. Others, with conditions that would be fatal conditions under normal circumstances, came through and returned to a normal life. All that was different was an energy of knowledge that "it will be ok." Go figure.....

Hence we should never lose sight of the big picture. Science is not all. But an understanding of life is - and how precious it is.

Until next time, stay cool over summer. I am thinking of all of you whose horses have and had to suffer from EI and I hope that they will all come out happy and healthy "on the other side" of EI.



Have a very Merry Christmas!
Carola & friends

www.EquineBareHoofCare.org

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Carlos' Whispering

This article is for all of you affected by the EI lockdown.

You may find yourself thinking that it's all a waste of time – not being able to go to shows, attend clinics, competitions or even a simple trail ride.

But it seems that we're always focusing on the negative, particularly when it comes to our horses.

However, I believe that sometimes what we perceive as an inconvenience or a problem can be a blessing in disguise.

So what's good about the EI crisis? Well, it gives you plenty of time to work on your relationship with your horse. If your horse has been infected, you may not be able to do the things we mentioned above, however this is not bad either because it may be the first time you've ever been able to really spend time with your horse giving and not expecting anything in return.

Welcome to the true meaning of horse time.

Let's get back to basics and focus on groundwork. Something you can never do enough of with your horse.

Now for those of you who have read my book, you'll know that by groundwork I don't mean driving the horse into the ground or sending the horse around in a mindless circle. There's much more to it than that.

Groundwork is the foundation that helps us put our horses into follow mode, just like in the herd. As you know, there's a pecking order. Within that pecking order, there's something called 'pairing'. Even among 600 horses, while there will be an order from one to 600, the horses will pair off with a buddy. So it's quite natural for the horse to be part of a pair. I guess that might be why we say two's company, three's a crowd.

But in that pair, one will be the leader, the other will follow. In our herd of two with our horses, we want to make sure that we're that leader. The reason is simple. We are the ones on the horse's back. If it was the other way around, I couldn't care if I was the follower, because when I'd had enough I'd buck them off. Can you see why it's important?

So what sorts of things can you do? Let's go back to CCKL = TOR. Simply, what we need in our relationship is trust, obedience and respect. But we can't get that without consistent, confident and kind leadership. Leave out one element and I guarantee, you will always be the follower.

As you can see from the following pictures, at the Boonah clinic earlier this year, groundwork is anything but boring! I like to introduce as many different things as possible – leaf blowers, umbrellas, flags, motorbikes. You'll soon find that your horse may be fantastic with tarps, but introduce a flag and it seems like you're starting from scratch.



Remember, it's not about the blower, the umbrella, the flag, the motorbike – it's about how you introduce those things to your horse. The principles are always the same, regardless of what you are introducing.



Take the blower. If you're not sure what you're doing, you might do the same with a tarp, rope, or the umbrella. You may first let the horse walk around it. Let him look at it and see that it's not going to get him. Then you may hold the blower and, leading your horse, let him have the opportunity to follow it as you walk around. If he's responding well, you might then, holding him on a loose rope, start by using the blower on his lower legs and working up. All the time, you're watching his response to make sure that you're releasing the pressure when you get a positive response.

Don't be greedy. Leave your horse on a good note. Give him some time to think things over and work out for himself what you have been asking of him. This is how I get my horses to be calm and responsive. After all

horses are, by nature, reactive. But I want my horses to be *responsive*, not reactive. This is just another example of why I always say there's no such thing as *natural* horsemanship.

But through good horsemanship, we can get our horses to be more like us – to think and respond – as long as we work to be more like them through understanding and feel.

So when you start thinking that the EI outbreak is robbing you of doing things with your horse, think again. You know how I always talk about when you do something for your horse it's like putting a silver coin in the bank. And when you do something to your horse (like a slap, or yank of the rope, or kick in the ribs) you take a gold coin out – which wasn't there for you to remove anyway.

Use this time to fill up your account.

I wish you all the best, as horses deserve that, and take this opportunity to wish you all a great Christmas and even greater New Year.



Carlos Tabernaberi.

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Michele's Massage Moment

"Why on earth horse massage?"

If I had \$1 for every time I was asked this question I would earn some easy pocket money!

When explaining equine massage to horsey and non-horsey people, I like to make the person think why humans would seek a massage and then I point out the similarities why horses benefit from it too. Horses are such large, strong (and sometimes vicious) animals that we easily underestimate their sensitivity to pain and emotion – if your horse competes, is in a demanding profession, is undergoing rehabilitation or is perhaps getting on in years and needs a little assistance to move more easily – consider the benefits of massage:

Sporting athletes – seek the competitive edge massage can give them through improved muscle flexibility, range

of movement and stamina. For a racehorse or showjumper that increase in stride length can mean the difference between a win or not – for the dressage horse it will help him to move gracefully rather than stilted mechanical movements.

Muscle tension and stress – when we work hard physically, are under stress or have repeated muscle strain this subjects our bodies to muscle spasms, knots and tears.



Unfortunately more than rest is sometimes required to relieve these problems (particularly if they have been present for a period of time) and if left untreated will overtime progress to more serious issues. Massage will relax the muscle so that it is no longer stuck in its contracted phase, it also realigns the muscle fibres breaking up adhesions and knots that restrict the muscle's flexibility and movement. Horses are susceptible to muscle injuries through incorrect training, direct injury (a slip in the paddock, being kicked etc), incorrectly fitting tack and stress (change of owner, loss of a paddock friend, learning new movements etc) which can cause agitation and stress resulting in tight muscles in the jaw, poll and neck. Although massage does not remove our/the horse's cause of stress it puts us in a better frame of mind to handle things and carry less tension in our bodies. Unfortunately over time muscles that are not performing correctly will affect surrounding muscles and can eventually escalate to bigger problems such as spinal misalignments, the horse moving unevenly, uneven muscling, uneven wearing of hooves, strain on joints etc.

Rehabilitation – if you have physically injured yourself sometimes your doctor will recommend a complementary therapy to restore as much function as possible to the area. Let's consider the horse here, if for example your horse received a serious kick that cut through part of its biceps femoris your vet may recommend massage to help with rehabilitation. Once the wound site has healed enough that the skin has closed over with no weeping a certified therapist will massage the injured area, encouraging the muscle fibres to lie in the correct direction breaking up adhesions and knots. This helps the body to heal more neatly with less scar tissue at the injury. Scar tissue is not flexible and therefore limits the elasticity of muscle and skin. The increased blood circulation will ensure enough blood supply is getting to the area and aid in a faster recovery. Finally, through massage and stretching of the limb the muscle will not be given the chance to shorten from lack of use therefore creating restricted movement. Remember with some injuries it will never return to 100% of what it was before injury – but massage can MAKE THE MOST OF WHAT YOU HAVE THERE to the point there may not be any physical noticeable difference after full recuperation.

I thought I would add - If you're one of those people that visits the Chiropractor and feels great after adjustment but then starts to feel sore again after a few days - you need a massage! Skeletal misalignments that have been left ignored for a period of time will have affected the muscles around it – so when the misalignment is corrected unfortunately the contracted muscles will eventually undo the chiropractors good work and things will move back to how they were prior to treatment.

There are a growing number of chiros that now offer a 20 minute massage beforehand to relax the muscles so his adjusting is easier and the results last. It's worth looking into for yourself and your horse.



So do you now see why massage is more than just a “luxury” therapy for humans and horses? I haven't gone into some of the more subtle equine benefits such as helping to reduce their tactile defence, identifying problem areas, improving mental attitude etc, but I can certainly say the outcomes can be quite amazing and a horse's change in attitude after a massage can range from being calmer than usual to showing a real zest for life and having more “go” than usual. Horses know nothing about the “placebo effect” so any improvement is genuine.

Best wishes for a great Christmas.
Michele

Michele is certified in Advanced Performance & Rehabilitation Equine Massage and has studied through Equinology Inc and Catherine Bird. Ph: 0414 946 904 or email mtjalland@bigpond.com to arrange a visit for your horse (Brisbane & Gold Coast Areas).

Holistic Approach to EI

EI & Vaccination

The following is a Holistic or alternative view on the topic of vaccination. The information is not given as professional advice; it is based on my own personal opinions and observations as a Holistic practitioner

There seems to be quite a lot of confusion around the need to vaccinate our horses against E.I. As you will see after reading the information kindly supplied by Dr. Glanville (below) there is no simple answer to vaccination or to “eradicating” this disease.

Vaccination generally has been a godsend in preventing many diseases throughout history. However if we approach disease holistically with new understandings of pathogens and see them as part of nature we view viruses, not as an enemy but then understand them as just another “vibration”.

Only then with full knowledge of **all** the options can we discern the best course of action.

Horses under certain situations **will** need to be vaccinated especially if they are exposed to and interact with other large groups of horses.

However we must also be aware that every horse is an individual each horse having varying degrees of immune competence; therefore vaccination for this reason is not a black and white issue.

Given more information and insight we can as horse owners make an informed choice as to what is right for our horse.

Holistic principals acknowledge each individual be it human or horse as a vibrating energy field and if the energy field of the individual is strong (healthy) enough it will not succumb to an opportunistic virus or bacteria

“Like attracts like” is a Law of Nature therefore if the health (vibration) of the horse is above or superior to the vibration of the “disease” we can be sure our horse will remain untroubled by a marauding virus

Horses are exposed to viruses, bacteria and cancer causing agents every day, and just like people some will fall victim to the particular disease caused by that agent while others will not. Holistic or Natural medicine looks at a healthy model and aims to strengthen the body accordingly and thereby be resilient against disease in a preventative manner.

General exposure to a pathogen can also induce Nature's form of vaccination; the body, in this instance is exposed to a virus but can adapt to the particular virus without getting ill.

The deciding factor as to whether a host will succumb and develop a disease (in this case E.I.) is the **immune status or strength of the particular host**.

A horse with a weakened, compromised or stressed immune system will fall ill while a healthy horse will not and, just like people some will show symptoms of the disease while others will not. Again, depending on the immune status some horses will only develop a mild set of symptoms as a result of coming into contact with E.I.

Whereas allopathic medicine, drugs, vaccines etc treat disease states the holistic approach focuses on preventative measures; by strengthening the “whole individual” at the level of body, mind and spirit.

The problem with vaccinating a healthy horse.....

We all live in a “soup” of viruses and bacteria. These pathogens usually enter the host's body naturally through the mucus membrane; they enter through the mouth, nasal passages and the digestive tract; they do NOT (under normal circumstances) enter the body directly into the circulatory system (i.e. the blood stream).

The immune cells in the body's mucus membrane (digestive tract and nasal passages) are the first line of defence to handle any pathogen. If the "invader" gets past this defence line and arrives in the circulatory system then the "big guns" of the immune system come out to kill these invading cells.

If a vaccine consisting of live cells is injected into the body of a healthy horse it could cause more damage than good if that horse already has an optimum, fully functioning immune system.

Equine influenza virus is a leading cause of respiratory disease in the horse, and vaccines were first developed in the 1960s. Despite their intensive use, equine influenza outbreaks still continue to occur; this is because virus and bacteria are also continually modifying their behaviour therefore ongoing new strategies of vaccinations are necessary to improve vaccine efficiency.

A Holistic practitioner sees health as the vitality of the overall body, mind and spirit aspect or the beings whole energy field. To a Holistic practitioner a healthy horse like a healthy person should (from a vibratory sense) be able to keep one step ahead of any dis-ease as long as any issue is addressed at the mind and spirit level as well as the physical level.

Whether a horse owner vaccinates their horse or not is a personal choice. A decision that should be arrived at after considering all the facts; a decision based on knowledge not made through fear. The following is a fact sheet issued by Dr. R Glanville;

Vaccination Myths – Qld Chief Veterinarian Dr Ron Glanville corrects misinformation

The equine influenza horse industry liaison officers have been doing a great job by providing feedback on policy issues, running horse industry meetings, and assisting in the production of various communications resources like fact sheets and biosecurity checklists and posters for horse owners and horse-related businesses.

This week as one of their many tasks, they compiled a list of common issues and circulating on various horse websites and blogs and they have asked me to comment on these (see below):

1. **Vaccination will guarantee my horse does not get equine influenza**

FALSE - there are very few vaccines for any disease in any species of animal (including humans) that provide 100% protection from a disease. The Genetically Modified Canary Pox vaccine being used in Queensland was selected as it rapidly produces immunity and because it is possible to distinguish between infected animals and vaccinated animals.

Vaccinated horses can still be affected by equine influenza infection and still shed the virus for a short period. The signs of disease are usually milder than those in non-vaccinated horses.

2. **Vaccination does not have any side effects**
FALSE - in a very few cases a small swelling may be noticed at the vaccination site.

As with any vaccine, the EI vaccine can cause a severe and potentially fatal reaction called anaphylactic shock. However this is extremely rare and it is one of the reasons why the vaccine should be administered by a vet.

3. **A vaccinated horse cannot infect other horses**
FALSE - a vaccinated horse can still shed virus, albeit normally for shorter periods. Spread can still occur to other horses, or a person can transfer the virus to other horses on their hands, hat, boots and clothes.

4. **Vaccination of horses will cure the Equine Influenza disease outbreak**
FALSE - vaccination of horses is not the cure for equine influenza. The disease must be contained and will burn itself out if it is stopped from spreading. Vaccination does considerably reduce the amount of virus that horses produce. The less virus in and around the infected areas, the less chance of the disease spreading.

5. **If all horses in the Red Zone were vaccinated, the disease problem would be fixed forever.**
FALSE - vaccinated horses can still spread the disease. It is better to keep horses disease free and allow infected horses to recover and develop strong natural immunity.

6. **Once horses are vaccinated they can move freely in the red zone**
FALSE - vaccinated horses cannot move freely in the red zone. The regulations for horse movement apply to both vaccinated and unvaccinated horses. However we are working closely with industry on protocols to free up movements as the EI epidemic wanes. Vaccination status of horses is one of the considerations in developing these protocols.

For more information contact the author Veronica Garrett at info@holistequine.com or visit their web site www.holistequine.com

Product News – NoBit Caps

Looking for something to stuff a stocking with this Christmas? Then the NoBit Bridle cap is the ideal gift for everyone. This quality cap comes in either Navy Blue or Natural, has a quality brass adjustment strap and buckle at the back (no Velcro so no hair pulling) and comes in an easy one-size-fits-all.



Protect your skin this summer and look stylish at the same time with the new NoBit Bridles cap.

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