

El Cajon Valley Veterinary Hospital

EQUINE FIRST AID

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ECVH EQ. DEPT.

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Downloadable

First Aid Charts

@

WWW.ECVH.COM

- Eye Chart
- Wound Chart
- Vital Signs Chart



As horse owners and caretakers, knowing basic equine first aid can come in quite handy. In some cases, first aid knowledge may save your horse's life.

This Equine Update will focus on first aid for wounds and eyes. We have laminated charts available for a nominal fee of \$5 should you desire a quick reference tool for your tack room or barn bulletin board.

WOUND CARE

Horses acquire wounds regardless of the season. Therefore, knowing what to do with different types of wounds is timeless.

First and foremost, perform a detailed assessment of the wound. Wounds can be classified as puncture wounds, lacerations, or abrasions. Puncture wounds occur when a foreign body punctures the horse's skin. They should be cleansed thoroughly in order to assess the depth of penetration, as well which anatomical structures were damaged. The hole created is like the tip of an iceberg; outwardly it may not look bad, but underneath can be a different story. Horses with puncture wounds may require a tetanus booster and systemic antibiotics.

Lacerations are wounds of varying depth that are created by more of a slicing action across the skin. Veterinarians many times will suture (or stitch) these types of wounds. Again, the area will require a thorough cleaning, and the horse a tetanus booster and systemic antibiotics.

IF A LACERATION LOOKS LIKE IT MIGHT NEED STITCHES, DO NOT APPLY ANY KIND OF OINTMENTS !!!

Abrasions are superficial scrapes, only involving a layer or two of skin. In most cases, the abrasion just needs to be cleaned up, and topical antibiotic ointment should be adequate. If in doubt, we are always here for consultation and help.

Now consider the location of the wound. Areas of greatest concern are eyes, over joints, and over tendons.

NEVER apply any soaps or ointments to a wound in this category.

DO NOT WAIT TO CALL YOUR VETERINARIAN.

If there is a large amount of bleeding, find a **CLEAN** bandage/towel and apply firm pressure. Do so until either the bleeding stops, or the veterinarian arrives. If the horse is too fractious or painful, just wait until the veterinarian arrives. Remember that pain can be frightening, and a horse's behavior can be affected by it.

Swelling is an indication of inflammation and may be a source of pain. Cold hose the area (unless over an eye or exposed tendon/joint) for a minimum of 15 minutes.

If debris is in the area, cold hose the wound to flush it out, as it can hide the depth or severity of the injury. Flushing the wound will give you a more accurate assessment of the situation.

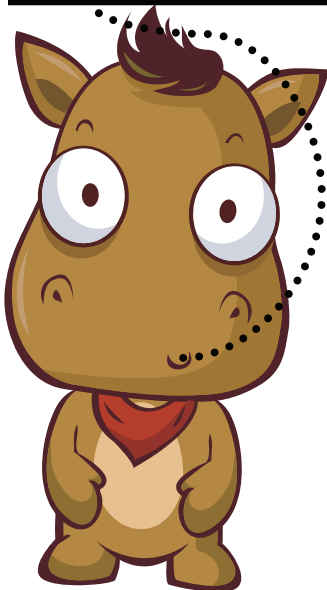
Lastly, evaluate your horse's posture and gait. Lameness signifies pain. Some horses readily show pain, while others are more stoic. Do not assume that the gait or posture directly correlates to the severity of an injury. Personality, pain tolerance, and structures involved in an injury will affect the demonstration of pain.



REMEMBER

**NEVER EVER
APPLY
ANY OINTMENTS
TO AN EYE
PRIOR TO
AN
OPHTHALMIC
EXAMINATION !**

**EYE INJURIES
ARE EYE
EMERGENCIES!**



Equine First Aid (continued from pg. 1)

Eyes

Daily visual inspection of your horse's eyes is key! Having an idea of what normal is, will alert you when something looks abnormal. Recognition of a problem early on will help prevent long term damage and/or loss of vision or the eye itself!

Signs of EYE PAIN:
DROOPY EYELIDS
SQUINTING
EXCESS TEARING

EYELID LACERATIONS

are an obvious ocular emergency. The cut portion of the lid usually hangs down and may be quite painful. **NEVER** tear the hanging portion off the rest of the eye. Palpebrae (eyelids) protect the horse's eye from foreign objects and help spread tears across the eye when blinking. The torn portion will have to be sutured back in place. **DO NOT** try and wash the eye either,

**NO SOAP
NEAR THE EYE!**

as you may risk tearing the lid further. Call for help immediately.

DROOPY EYELIDS may be indicative of eye

pain or neurological disease. Either should warrant a call for help.

SQUINTING

may be indicative of eye pain, which can be due to a foreign body, or inflammation of the cornea (edema/ulcer) or internal structures, as in EQ. Recurrent Uveitis, or Moon Blindness. This clinical sign warrants a call for veterinary help.

SWOLLEN EYELIDS

Usually involve the conjunctiva, the pink soft tissue between the eye lid and eyeball. Chemosis/conjunctivitis (swelling/inflammation of the conjunctiva) can be due to trauma and/or debris in the eye. Self trauma due to allergic reaction or pain in the eye can occur. If there are no signs of pain, you may attempt to flush the eye with a saline eye wash or apply hot/cold packs. If you do not get quick results, then you need help.

TEAR DUCTS

These structures can get plugged with debris, mucous, and fly larvae (Habronimeisis, known as a Summer Sore). Excessive tearing, and maybe signs of pain will be present. Saline eye washes and hot/cold compresses may do the job. If no success after a

few tries or the eye shows signs of pain, you need help.

CLOUDY CORNEA

Horse eyes should be clear. Cloudiness may indicate corneal edema, which can be due to inflammation or increased intraocular pressure (glaucoma). These eyes are referred to as "blue eyes". If you see this symptom along with signs of pain, help is needed.

WHITES OF THE EYE

The color of a horse's sclera, or globe of the eye, should be white. If you see redness, or enlarged blood vessels, this is an indication of inflammation—usually due to trauma or debris in the eye. Saline eye washes and hot/cold packs can be tried, but if you get no results in a few tries, or there are signs of pain, then you need help. A yellow sclera (jaundice, scleral xanthochromia) could be indicative of a liver problem, and blood tests and a physical exam should be done.

**NO BUTE
WITHOUT
TALKING TO A
VETERINARIAN
1ST !**

Equine Tidbit— RATTLESNAKE BITES !

It's the season for rattlesnakes and rattlesnake bites. **What will you do if your horse is bitten by a snake ????**

Snake bites on the horse's nose are the most dangerous. Horses are obligatory nose breathers, so if the nose swells too much suffocation and death can occur.

of water hose at least 6 inches long. This cheap piece of equipment will keep your horse's airway open, should the nose begin to swell shut. This hose should be placed all the way into the nostril, only leaving a 1/2 inch sticking out. If you can not get a few inches in, you are in the upper blind pouch of the nostril. Pull out and aim lower till you get all 6 inches in. Leave the hose in until it falls out, which indicates that the swelling has decreased enough that the hose is no longer needed.

Call your veterinarian immediately. The horse will need a tetanus booster, antibiotics and anti-inflammatories to avoid further complications. The use of anti-venom is controversial in horses. While you wait for help to arrive you should keep the horse quiet and remove any tack from the nose area if it starts to swell, but keep a rope around the neck for restraint.



**KEEP A
6 INCH LENGTH
3/4 TO 1 INCH WIDE
PIECE OF
WATER HOSE**

Thinking ahead is your best weapon. When going on trail rides, make sure you pack a 3/4-1 inch diameter piece

✦ Hands-On Wet Lab: FIRST AID ✦

In our last newsletter, we advertised our Hands On 1st Aid Wet Labs to raise money for the purchase of another sling for the Emergency Animal Rescue group.

The turnout was more than a success, raising a significant amount of

money to help in the purchase of another sling for the E.A.R. team.

Pictures from the wet labs can be seen on our website.

www.ecvvh.com

Click on Equine, then Hands On Wetlabs to

see what is covered in these wet labs, in case your group or barn are interested in having us do one of these labs for you!

Vital Signs, Eye and Wound First Aid Charts used in these wetlabs can be downloaded—click on tab for Articles & Charts.

Want to learn some Equine First Aid and practice it in front of actual veterinarians?

Call us and we will be glad to set up a Hands On Wetlab for you and your group!

Welcome Jillian!

The Equine Department at ECVVH would like to welcome Jillian to the hospital team!

Jillian has taken over as our department's receptionist and is looking forward to serving you by being an advocate for you and your horse when you call. She's learning fast and furiously. So, when you hear that new bubbly voice on the other end of the line, that's Jillian.

Please help us make her feel welcome at El Cajon!

To learn more about Jillian and the rest of the equine staff at ECVVH—go to our website & click on Equine!



What's inside this month's newsletter.....?????

After reading the contents inside, correctly answer all the questions below, return them to our office either by postal mail or email (**ECVVHEQ@YAHOO.COM**) and your name will be put into a drawing on April 15th (TAX DAY) to win one of the prizes below. Be sure and include your name, address, and phone numbers so that we can contact you. The four winners will be posted on our website (**www.ecvvh.com**) on April 16th, so be sure and check it to see if you win!

- **One Bucket of Hoof Rite Supplement**
- **One Bucket of Strongid-C2X Dewormer**
- **One Bucket of Equine Platinum Performance Vitamin/Mineral Supplement**
- **A personal one hour Hands On First Aid Lab for you and one other person by the doctor of your choice (within our practice area of course!).**

QUESTIONS:

1. What piece of equipment is needed for rattlesnake bites to the nose? (length & diameter)
2. If a wound needs stitches, what is the one thing you do not want to apply to it?
3. Is it OK to apply mediated soap to a wound over a tendon or joint?
4. What are 3 signs of Eye Pain?
5. If there is dirt in your horse's eye, is it OK to use a medicated soap to remove it?
6. What ointment is OK to apply into a horse's eye just before it is to be examined by a vet?