



# Wounds

Due to their nature, horses of all ages and breeds are very prone to injuring themselves. Almost every horse will have at least one, if not several wounds throughout their life time, so as a horse owner it is important to know some basic first aid and to know how to provide ongoing care for a wound.



## First Aid

- First step is Don't Panic! - Be as calm as you can when catching your horse and try to calm them so they don't cause any further injury to themselves.

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#### REC Partner Practices



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## First Aid continued...

- If your horse is able to walk then take them to a dry and clean stall or a quiet area on the yard. If you feel your horse is too sore to walk far then keep them where they are. A feed bucket is always a nice way to distract your horse from the pain of its wound and is often an easy way to relax them.
  - Get an extra pair of hands to help hold your horse before you try to assess the wound or apply first aid. Wounds are often painful and your horse might be quite anxious - the last thing you need is for them to accidentally hurt you whilst you are looking at their wound.
  - If the wound is still bleeding, apply even and direct pressure to the area using a sterile absorbent bandage, such as gauze swabs (avoid cotton wool). If the bandage soaks with blood simply place fresh material on top. By doing this you can avoid disturbing newly formed blood clots when the soaked material is peeled away.
  - Once bleeding has been controlled, try to assess the location, depth and severity of the wound and call your veterinarian. It is important to remember that wounds can be very deceptive in appearance. Some large wounds that appear horrific initially can heal extremely well whereas other seemingly minor wounds can result in severe career-ending infections if they are not dealt with quickly and appropriately.
  - Gentle cold hosing the wound is a useful measure to initiate. Cold can help reduce swelling, stop minor bleeding and clean the wound of contaminated material. One must try however to avoid further imbedding contaminates deeper into the wound by using a stream of water too powerful.
- The following is a brief guide to some of the things that should alert horse owners to seek veterinary consultation in regards to a wound.
    - Profuse bleeding that is not stopped by simple compression
    - The entire thickness of the skin has been broken
    - If the wound is anywhere near a joint or a tendon
    - Wound edges that gape apart or if there is a skin flap present
    - There appears to be contamination of the wound either with dirt or other foreign bodies
    - The horse is very lame, especially if the wound appears to be small
    - If structures deep to the skin such as muscle, bone or tendon can be seen
  - You should remember to avoid giving your horse any painkillers before your veterinarian arrives as they can mask the severity of the wound. Also avoid placing any topical treatments onto the wounds without consulting your veterinarian first.

## Wound Treatment

The overall aim of treating a horse wound is to avoid infection and promote a healthy healing environment so as to return function to the area and create an acceptable cosmetic appearance as quickly as possible. Obviously some wounds are much more severe than others, but the basic principle remains the same. Wound healing and the final outcome greatly depends on its initial management. "A job worth doing is a job worth doing right" is very applicable to horse wounds and by investing in appropriate veterinary care in the first instance one can greatly hasten wound healing and can often avoid lengthy complications and delayed healing.

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Your veterinarian will do many things with your horses wound to ensure it heals in the best way possible, these may include some of the following;

- flushing the wound with sterile saline to remove contamination
- debriding the wound of necrotic tissue or trimming skin flaps
- suturing the wound if it is appropriate
- applying topical treatments
- bandaging
- starting your horse on antibiotics if required

**“What do I put on the wound?”** This is probably the most common question asked of a vet in regards to wound care. The simple answer is that creams and gels are much better than coloured sprays and wound powders. Topical equine wound treatments have developed greatly in recent years and have vastly improved the speed and quality of healing. The attitude of “A wound is a wound, regardless of species” has seen many of the older equine treatments being replaced by a number of topical wound gels and creams that were developed in the field of human wound care. Hydrogels such as Intrasite® have been shown to promote healthy moist wound healing environments as well as aiding removal of necrotic tissue. Creams such as Flamazine® (only available via prescription) have antibacterial properties and significantly improve wound healing and was originally used in human hospital burns wards.

## **Bandaging**

Bandaging is one of the key ingredients in ensuring a good wound healing process so as to ensure a rapid return to function and a good cosmetic appearance. It is important as a horse owner to know what is involved in a good bandage and how to put one on. Every bandage contains 3 layers;

1. Primary layer - this is the layer that is placed directly onto the wound. It is non-stick so that when it is removed the new healthy healing tissue below is not accidentally damaged. Melanin® is often used as a primary dressing.

2. Secondary layer - this is the padding layer that provides even pressure over the wound. A product such as Gamgee® is a nice choice for this layer.
3. Tertiary layer - this is the top layer of the bandage that holds everything in place and provides compression. Products like Vetwrap® and Elastoplast® are used for this layer.

Some areas of the horse that are prone to wounds such as the hock are often quite tricky to bandage. If you are unsure how to place a bandage over a wound, don't hesitate to ask your veterinarian. A good tip is to watch closely as they place the initial bandage over the wound and ask them to explain what they are doing at each step.

## **Horse first-aid box**

All good tack rooms should have some sort of a first-aid or bandage box. The following is our recommendation for what you should have inside.

- Disposable rubber gloves
- Sterile Gauze swabs
- Various sizes of Melanin®
- Cotton Wool rolls
- Gamgee®
- Vetrap®
- Elastoplast®
- Scissors
- A digital thermometer

As you can see, this is quite a simple list but it will allow you to look after most types of wound. All of the components of your first aid box can be purchased from your veterinarian but quite a few can also be bought from human pharmacies and some tack shops.

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# Intelligent Worming Program

Intelligent worming is a relatively new concept in the management of horses that involves treating each and every horse as an individual. It is not always necessary to treat horses on a scheduled basis for worms. The best way to manage worms can be to investigate each horse's level of worm burden on an individual basis and only treat horses that actually need to be treated.

## Faecal Egg Counts

- A small sample of faeces is analysed under a microscope for the presence of worm eggs
- if egg count is greater than 350 eggs per gram = treat with wormer
- if less than 350 eggs = do not treat

## Benefits of FEC

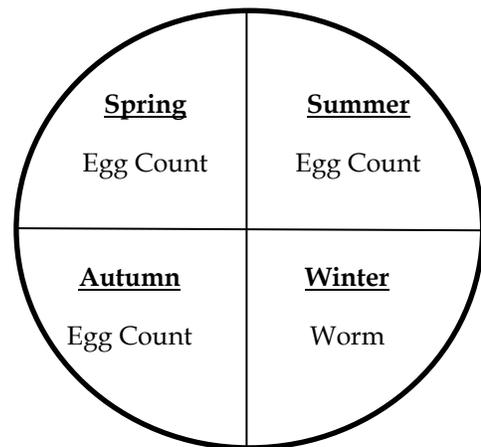
- Save money
- Less chemicals in your horse
- Less chemicals in the environment
- Minimising resistance problems in the future

## Reason why you need to still worm once per year

- FEC do not show evidence of tapeworm infestation, nor the level of encysted stage larvae of the small strongyle worm. Best worming option for this is Equest® + Tape

## What to do if your horse persistently has high FEC results

- Worm the horse and then repeat the FEC 2-3 weeks later
- If the result is still too high, stop using that class of worming medication as it is likely there is a resistance problem, and choose a different class of worming medication



It is important to consult your veterinarian before choosing the correct wormer for your horse. There are a wide variety of worming products available, some of which may not be appropriate for your horse. Always check with your vet before purchasing a worming product.



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# Sports Medicine Update



SPORTS MEDICINE & REHABILITATION  
RANDWICK EQUINE CENTRE

Since the last newsletter our sports medicine department has been as busy as ever. Dr Rachel Salz has been balancing her time between providing the very best of veterinary care to all her clients both in-hospital and on-road whilst studying for her specialist board exams in equine sports medicine and rehabilitation. She is due to sit the exams in January of next year and if successful will be the first veterinarian in Australia to be a specialist in sports medicine after completing a practice pathway residency.

Meanwhile Dr Christopher Elliott has been busy travelling and working at numerous events around the world. For the first 10 days of August Chris was working at the Rio 2016 Olympic test event about 45mins north east of Rio de Janerio. Appointed by the organising committee he was a treating vet for the event and will return in 2016 for the games proper. Just four days after the 30hr flight home from Brazil Chris was back in action as the vet delegate for the Tamworth CIC event and supported by Dr Christian Byrne as the treating veterinarian. Not long after finishing at Tamworth Chris was on another flight, this time to the United Kingdom. His first appointment was the Burghley Horse Trials in Lincolnshire as assistant to Dr Grahame Potts, the British based Australian Olympic team vet. This was followed by Christopher's most prestigious veterinary appointment to date as a member of the veterinary commission for the FEI European Eventing Championships at Blair Castle in Scotland. Christopher then spent two weeks at Rossdales Equine Hospital in Newmarket working alongside Dr Sarah Powell, a world leading authority on equine Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI). Within hours of arriving home from the UK Chris was then pitch side as the vet for the Northside Riding Club polo spectacular at the Mona Vale show grounds along with Dr Jemma Hayman. The following weekend saw Chris on the road again, this time to Canberra along with Dr Christian Byrne and Dr James Mizzi of Illawarra Equine Centre to vet at the National Capital Horse Trials.



# Shock Wave

Originally developed in human internal medicine to break down kidney stones Extracorporeal Shockwave Therapy (“Shockwave”) subsequently moved into the field of human sports medicine for the treatment of conditions such as Achilles tendonitis and plantar fasciitis of the foot. Shockwave uses high energy sound waves to help in tissue regeneration by causing “microtrauma” to an affected area. This helps to stimulate increased blood flow which then hopefully leads to better delivery of the elements required for healing. Shockwave also has short term analgesic (pain relieving) properties by overstimulation of the C nerve fibres within the affected area which leads to altered levels of neuropeptides and subsequent reduction in pain sensation.

Scientific evidence regarding the value of shockwave therapy in the treatment of musculoskeletal conditions is variable, but it has been shown to be valuable in the management of sesamoiditis and in a variety of ligament injuries, in particular injury to the proximal suspensory ligament. It is also commonly used in the treatment of back and sacroiliac pain.

Shockwave therapy usually involves treating the affected area once every two weeks for a total of three treatments. Each treatment usually involves between 500 and 1000 “shocks” being applied to the area. Horses usually tolerate the treatment well, but the machine is quite loud so most horses require sedation to perform the procedure.



*Shockwave therapy being performed on the medial collateral ligament*

## PODIATRY

**Don't forget about Randwick Equine Podiatry for all things feet. Our team of veterinarians working alongside experienced farriers Garth Derrig provides a thorough evaluation of your horse's gait, foot balance and lameness issues to construct a shoeing and management plan for optimal soundness and performance.**

For more information please contact the office or look at our website  
[www.randwickequine.com.au](http://www.randwickequine.com.au)



## REC News Welcome Tom

Our newest intern Dr Tom Bayes joins the clinic after graduating from the University of Nottingham School of Veterinary Medicine in the UK. Originally from Hertfordshire Tom enjoys all aspects of equine internal medicine, especially intensive care, and is interested in furthering his skills in the investigation and management of poor performance.