



**ELKHORN VETERINARY  
CLINIC LTD.**

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# The Lead Line

May, 2010

## EGUS (Equine Gastric Ulcer Syndrome)

Race and performance horses as well as foals undergoing stress are susceptible for developing stomach ulcers, also known as EGUS. In fact, up to 93% of race-horses get stomach ulcers in their lifetime, and almost 60% of performance horses have ulcers. Up to 57% of foals have stomach ulcers, particularly during the first several months of life.

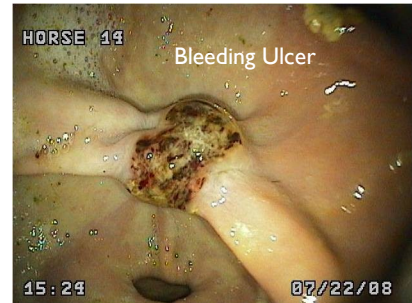


Healthy Stomach



Stomach Ulcers

A stomach ulcer is a wound on the lining of the stomach. Unlike in humans, where ulcers are thought to be primarily caused by the bacteria *H. Pylori*, the horse develops ulcers due to stress, feed intake, and management practices. Horses evolved on the plains, continuously grazing on lower quality forages. To accommodate this eating pattern the horse continuously produces acid into the stomach. This acid is beneficial to digestion when food is present in the stomach, but harmful to the stomach lining when the stomach is empty, causing stomach ulcers. Saliva acts as an acid-neutralizer. Increased salivation occurs when a horse chews hay and grass, which, when swallowed with the bolus of forage helps to neutralize the acid in the stomach. Also, roughage present in the stomach absorbs quite a bit of the acid, keeping the level within the stomach normal.



### Typical Symptoms of Stomach Ulcers in Horses

ADULT HORSES	FOALS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Attitude change</li> <li>•Dullness</li> <li>•Poor performance</li> <li>•Poor appetite</li> <li>•Poor condition</li> <li>•Colic</li> <li>•Behavioral changes</li> <li>•Response to treatment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Diarrhea</li> <li>•Poor Growth</li> <li>•Rough hair coat</li> <li>•Pot belly</li> <li>•Grinding of teeth</li> <li>•Colic</li> <li>•Lying on back</li> <li>•Excessive salivation</li> <li>•Interrupted nursing</li> <li>•Response to treatment</li> </ul>

### IN THIS ISSUE:

- **EGUS**
- **Integrative Medicine**
- **Composting**
- **Preventive Care**

Race, performance, and show horses are generally housed indoors and fed a higher concentrate (grain) diet. Grain or pelleted feed increases the level of a hormone known as gastrin. Gastrin is released by the stomach and acts as a stimulant for acid production. Depending upon feeding schedules, a horse may consume his grain, then have to wait to be feed his hay (roughage), all the while producing excess stomach acid.

Another reason for EGUS is exercise intensity. Studies have documented that the occurrence of ulcers increases as the level and duration of exercise increases. It is not clearly understood why this happens, but possibilities include that while the horse is exercising he is not eating and the stomach remains empty for longer periods allowing acid to injure the stomach lining.

Diagnosing EGUS can be difficult, especially since the horse can't tell us where he is hurting. Gastroscopy

*Continued on next page.*

## Ulcers (continued from front page)

(examining the inside of the stomach with a camera) can confirm stomach ulcers. If your horse is in training, the chances are fairly good that he has stomach ulcers even if you do not recognize any symptoms. Often only after treatment for ulcers does an owner realize how "off" their horse was and how improved its attitude, condition, and performance is. The chart (on the front page) outlines typical symptoms of ulcers in the adult horse and in foals.

If stomach ulcers are suspected or confirmed, treatment with omeprazole (GastroGard®) is indicated. Omeprazole works by reducing the production of stomach acid, thus allowing the stomach to heal. Additionally, the horse should be fed hay more frequently throughout the day, or, if possible, turned out on pasture to graze. The owner may also wish to reduce the horse's work load for a few days until he appears to be feeling better.

Owners of horses with the propensity to develop EGUS also have the option of using UlcerGard® to aid in the prevention of ulcers.

As with all health issues, the veterinarians at the Elkhorn Veterinary Clinic are eager to assist you in making the best choices for your horse.

## GASTROSCOPY EVENT

with

*Merial's Dr. Hoyt Cheramie & Elkhorn Veterinary Clinic Ltd*

**June 9, 2010**



***If your horse often travels, competes, trains, is confined or experiences other potentially stressful situations, he or she may be eligible for a free gastroscopy with Dr. Hoyt Cheramie, compliments of Merial and Elkhorn Veterinary Clinic.***

Horses will be scoped by appointment throughout the day at the Elkhorn Veterinary Clinic.

Dr. Hoyt Cheramie will present an educational seminar on stomach ulcers in the evening at Sperino's Pizza in Elkhorn.

If you are interested in attending, please contact the Elkhorn Veterinary Clinic by June 1st.



## Integrative Medicine, Acupuncture & Herbs Now Available through Elkhorn Veterinary Clinic

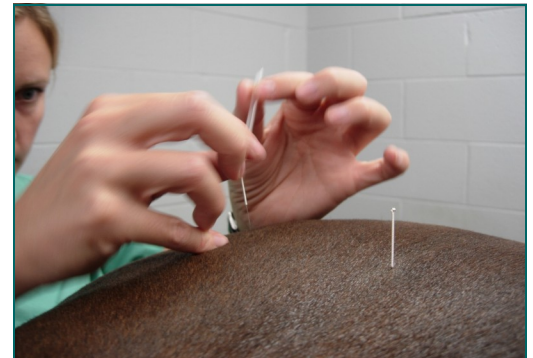
The veterinarians of the Elkhorn Veterinary Clinic recognize that their clients have diverse views with regard to treatment regimens for themselves as well as for their horses and pets. Acupuncture and herbal medicine are used by many of our clients as either the primary therapy choice or adjunct therapy for their own medical conditions. Horses and pets can also benefit from these non-Western based medical treatments.

Acupuncture has its roots in China and has been practiced there on humans and animals for over 3,000 years. Today it is practiced safely and effectively throughout the world when administered by a qualified practitioner. Each patient is treated as an individual based on the Chinese disease pattern. Chinese medicine emphasizes assisting the body to heal. The goal is to balance energy and reduce pain and inflammation.

Herbs and plants have been used for medicinal purposes long before recorded history. Scientists have discovered that people throughout the globe have used similar plants and herbs for the same purposes. Most of our pharmaceuticals today are synthetics derived from plants and herbs. The use of herbs is gaining popularity as improvements

in analysis and quality control along with advances in clinical research show their value in the treatment and prevention of disease.

Only licensed veterinarians may practice acupuncture on animals in Wisconsin. Dr. Theresa Schreiner has recently passed the rigorous course work and certification process to become a Certified Veterinary Acupuncturist.



*Dr. Theresa Schreiner, Certified Veterinary Acupuncturist, inserts needles into the croup of an arthritic equine patient.*

***Acupuncture can help relieve the symptoms and lessen the discomfort for many of the health problems that afflict our horses and pets.***

**Following is a partial list of problems which may be successfully treated with acupuncture therapy:**

- Acute Musculoskeletal Inflammation
- Acute or Chronic Back Pain
- Acute or Chronic Neck Pain
- Neurological Disorders
- Gastrointestinal Disorders
- Ring Bone
- Navicular Syndrome
- Reproductive Disorders
- Dermatological Disorders
- Allergies
- Arthritis

## Composting Manure - Good for Your Horse and the Environment

Each day, the average horse produces 50 pounds of manure not including the bedding that is removed with the manure when stalls are cleaned. How to dispose of all that waste can cause headaches for horse owners. Owners may contract with a waste removal company, which can be expensive. Manure left in piles attracts flies, creates an unpleasant odor for neighbors, and may cause serious surface water contamination. Spreading fresh manure on pastures broadcasts parasite eggs, leading to parasite reinfestation when horses graze.

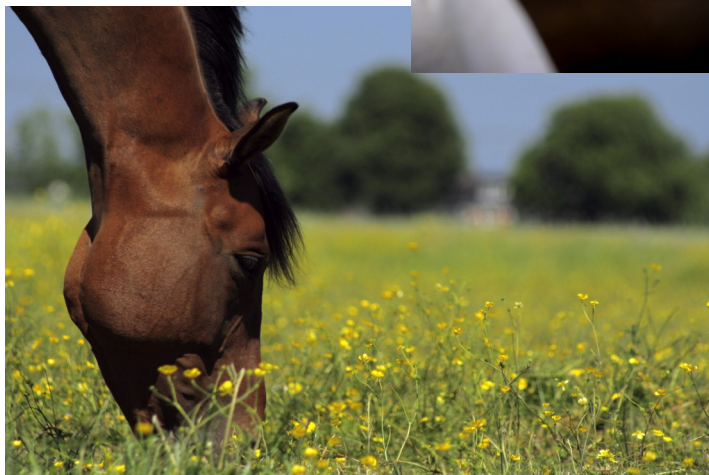
Composting manure is an excellent management tool for all sizes of horse properties, from the backyard or small farm owner to the large stable. Composting speeds up the natural decomposition of the manure while turning it into a dark, crumbly, earthy-smelling product similar to potting soil. Other advantages are:

- **Composting generates heat which kills parasite eggs, fly larvae, pathogens and weed seeds.**
- **Composting reduces flies by eliminating their breeding ground.**
- **Composting reduces odors.**
- **Composting reduces the volume of waste material by 50%.**
- **Composting reduces the incidence of manure contaminated runoff reaching surface or ground water.**
- **Composting transforms a potential liability into a valuable resource.**

Composting bins can be fairly easy to assemble. They are three-sided bins, using common sides. The size and number of the bins are determined by the number of horses in the herd and the type and amount of bedding used. One or two horse herds can generally get by with two bins. Larger herds may need three bins. The location for the bins should be on high, level ground convenient to the stall and paddock areas. Bins should either be covered with a roof, or the manure covered by using a tarp to assist in the control of moisture.

To speed decomposition, piles should be turned to allow oxygen to get to the bacteria and organisms which break down the manure. Additionally, the compost pile should be kept as damp as a rung-out sponge. Depending on how often the compost pile is worked, composting should take a couple of months in the summer and three to five months in the winter. The compost is ready when the material is reduced by about 50% and the material appears evenly textured and crumbly like soil.

***Your county extension agent is an excellent resource for assistance in developing a composting system.***



## Introducing Your Horse to Pasture

It's spring, our pastures are green and lush, the weather is warm, and the days are lengthening. It's tempting to throw open the barn door and let the horses enjoy themselves grazing on the new grass after a winter of hay. However, the abrupt change in diet can be detrimental to your horse,

To avoid health concerns such as colic, founder or laminitis, it is best to introduce

your horse gradually to pasture. Horses may be turned out for a half hour to graze, with an increase of ten minutes daily until the horse can be left out for several hours.

Ponies and horses with Cushing's, Equine Metabolic Syndrome, or a history of laminitis should be started more slowly

as they can be especially prone to grass founder.

If you are concerned that your horse may gorge himself on grass, feed him his hay before turning him out to graze. You may also purchase a grazing muzzle for your horse to limit his grass intake.

## *“Leading Your Horse to a Healthy Future”*

### Dr. Leiblse Board Certified in Equine Practice



The Elkhorn Veterinary Clinic is proud to announce that Scott Leiblse, DVM, has been certified as a Diplomate by the American Board of Veterinary Practitioners (ABVP), specializing in equine practice. Dr. Leiblse is the only veterinarian in Wisconsin that holds this board certification.

Dr. Leiblse mastered a rigorous and demanding application process and certification examination in order to obtain Diplomate status. To qualify to sit for the extensive, two-day examination, a veterinarian must complete either a residency program or six years of clinical veterinary practice. In addition, two case reports, references, descriptions of practice procedures, and professional education records must be submitted and pass review.

Dr. Leiblse is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Veterinary Medicine. He has a special interest in dentistry, lameness, and soft-tissue surgery.

### Preventive Medicine the Key to Cost-Effective Care

It's no secret that our economy has been hit hard the last few years. Everyone seems to be tightening their belts with horse owners being no exception. Owners may have a tendency to put off preventive care in order to save money, but this strategy usually backfires.

Vaccinations are the most important element in preventing infectious and deadly disease. The price of the immunization is far less than the cost of treating the disease. For instance, it costs approximately 20 times more to treat a case of influenza in the horse than the vaccination would cost. The cost to treat a horse with West Nile Virus can be in the thousands of dollars and the prognosis is poor. In some cases, owners are forced to make the difficult decision to euthanize the horse because treatment is beyond their economic means.

Annual dental care is essential to maintaining the overall health of the horse. Sharp points should be filed (floated) so the horse can better grind his feed, allowing higher utilization of the grain and hay, therefore reducing feed costs. Annual oral exams are even more important with older horses as they often have problems such as loose teeth, infected roots, or uneven wear which makes it difficult for them to eat and may predispose them to other health problems.

Deworming recommendations have changed due to the increased parasite resistance to current dewormers. Fecal egg counts and fecal egg count reduction tests are essential to determine the type of dewormer to use and the number of times a year your horse should be dewormed.

Electing to enroll your horse in our Equine Wellness Program is an affordable option that provides the necessary preventive care for your horse at a 25% discount. Call our office or visit our website for more information.