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OUR QUARTERLY UPDATE

FREE EDUCATIONAL EVENING

Join us on Thursday 18th May for a free educational evening all about equine dentistry!

It will be hosted by Professor Padraic Dixon MVB PhD DipEVDC FRCVS - a major contributor to the modern development of equine dentistry.

Give us a call on 01555 660000 or email equine@clydevetgroup.co.uk to book your place.

Be quick as there are limited spaces!

Can't make it? Don't worry... we will be recording the evening and sharing it on our socials and website!

Clyde Vet Group Equine Hospital
invite you to an **Educational Evening!**

Equine Dentistry

Thursday 18th May 7pm

Come and join our FREE educational evening!

Speaker:

Professor Padraic Dixon MVB PhD DipEVDC FRCVS

Professor Dixon has been a major contributor to the modern development of equine dentistry and upper airway surgery. He is recognised as a world leader in equine dentistry and as vets, we use much of his dental research on a day-to-day basis treating your horses.

What will be covered?

The Evolution of Horses And Their Ongoing Contribution To Human Society
Equine Dentistry In 2023 – How Has It Changed?



To book your free space, phone our reception on
01555 660000 or email equine@clydevetgroup.co.uk



MEET THE NEWEST MEMBER OF OUR VETERINARY TEAM

Keep an eye out for Lily who will be out on-the-road with vet Danai. She's very much looking forward to meeting you all !



BOOK US FOR YOUR EQUINE EVENT

WE CAN COME OUT TO YOUR PONY CLUB OR RIDING CLUB EVENT AND GIVE AN INTERACTIVE AND EDUCATIONAL TALK.

To book, please contact us via email or telephone the practice.



HAT HAIR DON'T CARE!

DID YOU KNOW....ACCORDING TO A SURVEY CONDUCTED BY THE BRITISH EQUINE VETERINARY ASSOCIATION, BEING A HORSE VET CARRIES THE HIGHEST RISK OF INJURY OF ANY CIVILIAN OCCUPATION IN THE UK.

That is why we have embraced safety for our whole veterinary team, by supplying all of them with a helmet.

In other professions and disciplines within the equine industry, the wearing of hard hats has for a long while been accepted as the norm and a mandatory safety requirement.

It will now be a common occurrence to see our team members wearing a helmet in the practice or when our vets are visiting patients on the road.

Please help us to stay safe as we examine and treat your horses ...and please wear your helmet too!





EQUINE DENTAL HEALTH CHECKS



Throughout March to May, we are creating awareness to the importance of equine dental health checks. Dental care is extremely important of the health and welfare of our horses. Prevention is always better than cure and as such we encourage our clients to have their horse's mouths examined on a regular basis.

EQUINE DENTAL CARE

The horse's mouth has evolved over several million years to become a highly efficient grinding machine, perfect for grazing for long periods of time on coarse, fibrous grasses. In the wild, a horse may graze for up to 18 hours a day. As herbivores they rely on the grinding mechanism of their teeth to break down their feed in order to obtain adequate nourishment.

Horses' teeth are durable and have a large crown, making them capable of withstanding significant wear. Unlike human teeth, horses' teeth continue to erupt throughout their life.

The rate of eruption is around 2-3mm per year and corresponds to the rate of wear caused by the opposing tooth and a fibrous diet. The result is that the crown height (above the gum line) remains roughly constant whilst the reserve crown (the part of the tooth beneath the gum line within the skull) becomes shorter with age.

When horses chew their food, they move their jaw in a repetitive cyclical motion. The amount of time spent chewing and the range of movement in the jaw is significantly greater when eating a coarse high fibre diet, as compared to a softer more carbohydrate rich diet.

The modern domesticated horse doesn't need to work quite as hard as their wild counterpart for their calories. They generally have access to much more plentiful grazing and grass types which are softer and lusher, and therefore more easy to break down and digest.

Unfortunately, this means there is more potential for the development of dental wear abnormalities over time. This is why regular examination and preventative treatment is essential in domestic horses.

COMMON SIGNS OF A DENTAL PROBLEM

Clinical signs of dental disease are variable and there may be no outward signs at all. The lack of clinical signs can therefore not be relied upon to make the assumption that all is well.

Some of the more obvious indicators of dental disease include:

- Weight loss
- Difficulty eating (Dysphagia)
- Quidding (dropping chewed up balls of feed)
- Biting problems
- Issues when ridden
- Halitosis (bad breath)
- Behavioural changes
- Facial swelling
- One-sided nasal discharge

EXAMINING A HORSE'S MOUTH

Legally, dentistry should only ever be carried out by a vet or a qualified Equine Dental Technician (EDT).

The dental exam should not be simply thought of as a 'tooth rasp' - it is an examination first and foremost. Compare this with your own visits to the dentist.

Veterinary surgeons will always thoroughly examine your horse's mouth. This will most commonly be done under sedation, meaning that subtle pathology will be identified at an early stage and appropriate treatment can then be given.

Who is permitted to carry out specific dental procedures is regulated by law. Veterinary surgeons are qualified to deal with the full range of problems which they may encounter within your horse's mouth. They are also able to take a holistic view of the patient and put any findings into context with the animal as a whole. Only veterinary surgeons can legally administer intravenous sedation.

HOW OFTEN SHOULD MY HORSE RECEIVE A DENTAL EXAMINATION?

Your horse's teeth should be examined by your vet every 6-12 months unless advised otherwise.

It's important to identify problems early.

Thorough and regular examination is key to maintaining dental health.

OUR EQUINE DENTAL SERVICES

Our experienced veterinary surgeons regularly perform a full range of dental procedures at your stables or in our clinic:

- Routine dental rasping
- Wolf tooth removal
- Ophthalmoscope examination
- Dental radiography
- Tooth extraction

If you have any questions regarding your horse's dental health, please contact us to speak to one of our vets.



TICK BITES

SYMPTOMS, CAUSES, DIAGNOSIS & TREATMENT

Ticks are widespread in the UK and are arachnids rather than insects. Like spiders, adult ticks have 8 legs and vary tenfold in size from 1 millimetre to 1 centimetre.

Ticks hatch from eggs and develop into larvae, then nymphs, and finally into adults. At each stage ticks have to attach onto and feed from an animal (their host), to develop into the next stage. The younger stages of ticks, like larvae, prefer to feed on small animals like birds and rodents. However, the older stages can attach onto and feed on larger mammals, such as horses, and also humans.

For this reason, these unwelcome hitchhikers are something you should be aware of.

HOW DO HORSE'S GET TICKS?

Whilst they could be found in some gardens, particularly in more rural areas, ticks are most commonly found in vegetation in areas such as woodland, meadows and moors. When they are looking for a new host to attach to, they are described as 'questing' and will wait on low branches and leaves to attach to any animal brushing past.

IS THERE A PARTICULAR TIME OF YEAR THAT YOUR HORSE IS LIKELY TO BE AFFECTED?

Ticks are most active in spring and early summer, and then again in early autumn. They are generally dormant in cold weather. However, with global temperatures on the rise, they are likely to be active for a greater proportion of the year.



WHY SHOULD YOU WORRY ABOUT TICKS BITING YOUR HORSE?

The majority of the time, tick bites will not harm your horse. Rarely, bacterial infections or abscesses will develop at the site of a bite. This is more likely to occur if a tick has been improperly removed, with part of the tick being left in the skin. However, the main reason for wanting to prevent tick bites in horses is that they have the potential to act as vectors (spreaders) of infectious disease.





Lyme Disease

WHAT DISEASES CAN BE SPREAD TO YOUR HORSE FROM TICKS?

In the UK the most common disease that ticks transmit is Lyme disease, caused by the bacterium *Borrelia burgdorferi*.

Signs of Lyme disease in horses can include:

- Mild pyrexia (a temperature above the normal range)
- Lethargy
- Weight Loss/Anorexia
- Lameness/Stiffness
- Muscle soreness
- Laminitis
- Uveitis (inflammation within the eye)
- Ataxia (unable to control their movement/a lack of coordination)
- Hyperaesthesia (Sensitivity)

Your vet can diagnose Lyme disease from a clinical examination, followed by taking a blood or joint fluid sample.

Another transmittable disease from ticks is Anaplasmosis, which is caused by the Rickettsial organism *Anaplasma phagocytophilum* (formerly *Ehrlichia equi*).

Signs of Anaplasmosis can include:

- Pyrexia (a temperature above the normal range)
- Weight Loss/Anorexia
- Ataxia (unable to control their movement/a lack of coordination)
- Collapse/recumbency
- Ventral oedema (swelling under the horse's stomach)
- Small red lesions on the gums

Your vet can diagnose Anaplasmosis from a clinical examination, followed by a clinical examination and taking a blood sample.

Treatment for both Lyme disease and Anaplasmosis includes antibiotics and anti-inflammatory medications, which may need to initially be given intravenously.

HOW CAN YOU PREVENT YOUR HORSE FROM GETTING TICKS?

It is important to check your horse all over daily for ticks and remove any that are found, particularly at times of the year when ticks are most active.

There are a variety of preventative tick treatments available that will repel ticks, kill them once they have attached, or both. Infected ticks do not spread infections such as Lyme disease until they have been attached to the host for around 48 hours. Effective tick treatments will kill ticks much quicker than this, meaning they are killed before they can transmit disease to your horse.

Our practice team would be happy to discuss with you what treatment would be best suited to use for your horse, so please do get in touch.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU FIND A TICK ON YOUR HORSE?

The easiest way to remove a tick is by twisting it off using a special tick remover.

Properly removing a tick in this way reduces the risk of leaving the tick's mouthparts still attached.

*****Ticks should never be removed by squeezing or pulling, nor by being burnt.*****



If you are unsure or worried that your horse has a tick, please do not hesitate to contact us.



SPRING EQUINE EMERGENCIES

SPRING IS IN THE AIR; THE FLOWERS ARE BLOOMING AND THE TREES AND PADDOCKS ARE TURNING A LOVELY SHADE OF GREEN. SADLY, IT CAN ALSO MEAN HIDDEN DANGERS FOR YOUR HORSE.

LAMINITIS

Spring grass is high in sugars called fructans and can induce laminitis if eaten in large amounts.

Laminitis is a painful and potentially devastating disease that causes pathological changes in the laminae of the feet and, in severe cases, may result in long lasting, crippling changes.

Warning signs to look out for:

- Weight shifting
- Reluctance to move
- Rocking back onto the heels
- An increase in hoof wall temperature

Minimising the risk of laminitis:

- Watch your horse does not become overweight
- You should carefully monitor your horse's diet
- Restrict your horse's grass intake where necessary by strip grazing using electric tape or using a muzzle

Monitor your horse daily for signs of laminitis.

Prevention is always better than cure – if in any doubt, always call your vet.

COLIC

Spring brings an increase in lush grass and so it is vital that you manage your horse's intake.

Horses are usually fed hay and hard feed over the winter to keep weight on and so most horses come out of the winter looking rather well. They will not be used to the rich green grass and so it is important you gradually introduce them to the Spring grass slowly. Failure to do this may cause an upset of the horse's intestinal bacteria, which could lead to colic.

Warning signs to look out for:

- Flank watching
- Pawing
- Rolling
- Lip curling
- Quiet/dull
- Not wanting to eat
- Lying down frequently
- Reduced faecal output
- Stretching out frequently as though to urinate

Signs can vary from mild to severe, and things can often change very quickly.

It is important to know what is normal for your horse, so that you can be aware of any changes which may be an early sign of colic.

Minimising the risk of colic:

- Make changes to routine slowly over several weeks
- For horses going onto summer grazing, increase the time spent on new grass slowly, starting with an hour per day
- For horses that are likely to gorge themselves on long grass, consider using a grazing muzzle
- Keep your horse up to date with targeted worming and dental treatment
- Ensure that your horse drinks plenty of water





SPRING EQUINE EMERGENCIES

GRASS SICKNESS

Equine grass sickness (EGS) can occur at any time of the year but is most often seen between April to July.

The disease affects mainly grazing horses and currently the cause remains unclear. The disease mainly acts by disrupting the nerves that supply the gastrointestinal tract, hence affecting gut motility. However, other parts of the general nervous system are also affected.

Warning signs to look out for:

- Colic (mild or severe)
- Dull demeanour
- Muscle tremors
- Sweating
- Difficulty eating
- Excess salivation
- Eyelids appear droopy
- Increased heart rate
- Firm faecal balls with mucous coating

Minimising the risk of EGS:

- Try and limit exposure to pastures during high risk periods where previous cases have occurred
- Reduce the amount of soil disturbance from methods such as harrowing or mechanical faeces removal
- Encourage removal of faeces by hand
- In heavily grazed or sparse pastures offer supplementary forage
- Avoid sudden changes in diet
- Limit use of ivermectin based wormers
- Minimise the number of horses co-grazing, especially youngsters

ATYPICAL MYOPATHY

Atypical myopathy, caused by horses eating sycamore seeds, often occurs during the spring and autumn months and is a highly fatal muscle disease in horses.

It is caused by a toxin found in sycamore trees (*Acer Pseudoplatanus*) and is a distressing disease that results in degradation of respiratory, cardiac (heart) and postural muscles.

At this time of year, sycamore seedlings are starting to appear and it is vital your horses do not ingest them. Horses suffering from atypical myopathy have high levels of a toxin called Hypoglycin A that prevents energy being produced within their muscle cells.

Warning signs to look out for:

- Weakness
- Muscle trembling
- Signs of colic
- Exercise intolerance



Minimising the risk of atypical myopathy:

To minimise your horse's risk of atypical myopathy, reduce exposure to sycamore seeds and seedlings by removing them from the ground. If this is not possible, then removing the horse from the area is crucial.