



Fall and Winter Health Tips

Dental care helps horses during cold weather

By: Roger Shaw III, DVM

Cold weather is coming. During winter horses face numerous nutritional challenges. Forage quality drops as fall and winter progress. Hay quality declines during storage. The impulse to drink is much less in cold weather. All of these things can lead to digestive disturbances, colic, and weight loss. Routine dental care can decrease the effects of old man winter on your horse's health.

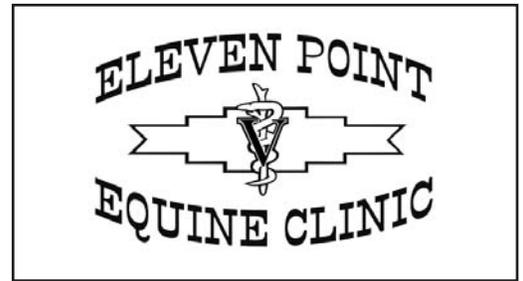
Dental disease has numerous adverse effects on your horse that are amplified during cold weather. Mild gingivitis and sharp enamel points can make it painful to drink cold water in the winter. This in turn can lead to dehydration and an increase in impaction colic that we see in cold weather. Sharp enamel points and uneven grinding surfaces decrease your horse's ability to chew food efficiently. During winter poorer forage quality and increased fiber quality in the forage require more mastication (chewing) to extract the available nutrients from the forage. To combat this you have two choices. Increase the amount and quality of feed available to the horse, or use dental care to maximize the utilization of the feed available.

Increasing the amount and quality of concentrate fed to the horse may stabilize his weight, but as his dental condition worsens over time he will require more concentrates to stabilize his weight. Large amounts of concentrates can create health issues of their own.

Dental care in the fall can decrease the pain associated with consuming cold water, decrease the pain associated with chewing, and maximize the ability of the horse to utilize available forage for nutrition. In short, appropriate dental care can increase your horse's health and welfare and possibly save you money by increasing feed conversion.

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Spotlight on Digital Imaging

By: Roger Shaw III, DVM

Eleven Point Equine Clinic is proud to have Digital Radiology and Digital Ultrasound available for our clients.

We utilize Fuji Computed Radiology, the world leader in medical imaging, for our digital radiology. Digital radiology gives us improved image quality over traditional x-rays. It also allows much higher diagnostic accuracy of these images. Digital radiology also allows us to visualize soft tissues like never before. With improved image quality this technology allows us to diagnose orthopedic injuries much sooner. It also allows us to diagnose some previously undetectable abnormalities. This technology allows for prompt and effortless referrals and second opinions. Imaging studies can be moved from veterinarian to veterinarian electronically in minutes instead of days with plain films. Copies of the radiographic study are also available for the client to take with them on CD, and can be viewed from any home computer.

We offer diagnostic Digital Ultrasound by Universal Ultrasound. The MyLab unit we employ generates high resolution images for orthopedic, reproductive, and general medicine. This technology has increased our diagnostic capability in orthopedic and sports medicine. Like digital radiology digital ultrasound images can be sent around the world almost instantly and effortlessly.

I feel that the addition and utilization of both of these technologies allows us to practice a high quality of medicine and optimize your horse ownership experience.

Eleven Point Equine Clinic
Tel. (417) 764-3691



HC 3 Box 61
Birch Tree, mo 65438
Tel. (417) 764-3691



Other Winter Concerns

Horses, unlike us, are equipped to deal with winter's temperature extremes. Horses generate heat from the fermentation that occurs in the hindgut. Feeding roughage (Hay) increases the colons heat production. Their large body mass, effective thick haircoat, and unique peripheral circulation allow them to tolerate sub-zero temperatures in relative comfort as long as they stay dry. To improve their comfort, we recommend providing horses free choice shelter from the rain and wind. Provide a continually open (unfrozen) water source. Provide plenty of good quality roughage to assist them in producing body heat.

Dates of interest:

AQHA World Show
Nov. 6th–Nov. 21st

Breeders Cup World Championship
Nov. 6th–7th

NCHA Futurity
Nov. 20th–Dec. 12th

National Finals Rodeo
Dec. 3rd–12th

Tips for Recognizing Dental Problems

Horses with dental problems may show obvious signs, such as pain or irritation, or they may show no noticeable signs at all. This is because some horses simply adapt to their discomfort. For this reason, periodic dental examinations are essential to your horse's health.

It is important to catch dental problems early. If a horse starts behaving abnormally, dental problems should be considered as a potential cause. Waiting too long may increase the difficulty of remedying certain conditions or may even make remedy impossible. Look for the following indicators of dental problems from the American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP) to know when to seek veterinary attention for your horse:

1. Loss of feed from mouth while eating, difficulty with chewing, or excessive salivation.
2. Loss of body condition.
3. Large or undigested feed particles (long stems or whole grain) in manure.
4. Head tilting or tossing, bit chewing, tongue lolling, fighting the bit, or resisting bridling.
5. Poor performance, such as lugging on the bridle, failing to turn or stop, even bucking.
6. Foul odor from mouth or nostrils, or traces of blood from the mouth.
7. Nasal discharge or swelling of the face, jaw or mouth tissues.



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Quick Tip

Fall is the time to deworm for Bots. To control these parasites administer an Ivermectin brand of dewormer or Quest after the first killing frost.

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