



NOTES FROM PILCHUCK

NEW TECHNOLOGY & TREATMENTS

November 2003

EXTRACORPOREAL SHOCKWAVE THERAPY

Extracorporeal Shock Wave Therapy (ESWT) became available to patients at Pilchuck Veterinary Hospital in June of this year. It is a new treatment for horse, dog, & human athletic injuries or arthritic conditions. Recent research and ongoing work support the success of ESWT in the treatment of soft tissue & bone injuries which have responded with limited success to conventional therapies or prolonged rest.

What exactly is ESWT? In brief, it is a non-invasive procedure that utilizes the production of acoustic sound waves to produce high-pressure waves that are focused at a point of tissue or bone to stimulate healing. Studies have shown that it reduces inflammation, thereby reducing pain as it promotes healing. It has also been beneficial in shortening recovery times. ESWT has been used successfully in the treatment of the following conditions: bowed tendons (tendonitis), suspensory ligament injuries (desmitis), stress fractures, splint bone fractures or splint exostosis, bone spavin (hock arthritis), navicular syndrome, sacro-iliac conditions (Hunters Bumps), overriding spines (Withers), and primary back pain.

If you have a horse or dog that you feel may be a candidate for ESWT, please call our equine department, 360.568.3111 or 800.208.9192. Our doctors will be happy to answer any questions you may have regarding the therapy.

LOGIQ BOOK ULTRASOUND

A new diagnostic ultrasound capable of providing an enhanced image is now in use by our veterinarians treating both horses and small animals. The GE Logiq Book is a laptop computer with a high-resolution ultrasound probe. It is primarily used for the diagnosis of tendon/ligament injuries in horses, and abdominal/cardiac problems in small animals. Unlike most other veterinary ultrasound machines, the Logiq Book has enhanced resolution for better diagnostic capabilities and records images in a digital format. Additionally, it is able to obtain three-dimensional images for a more complete evaluation of the structure of interest. There are a limited number of practices in the U.S. that have this new technology. Pilchuck Veterinary Hospital is the only one in Western Washington.

Did you know that Pilchuck has an Emergency Clinic for small animals with a veterinarian on site 24 hours a day, seven days a week?

STOMACH ULCERS IN HORSES

Recent studies have shown that 60% to 90% of adult horses have gastric ulcers. However, not all ulcers are clinically significant. The highest incidence of ulcers are in horses that are in training, have had a recent change in diet, are on diets high in concentrates, or are ill. Clinical signs of gastric ulcers are wide ranging and can include colic, loss of appetite, poor condition or poor hair coat, slow weight loss, failure to gain weight when appropriate, or a drop in the horse's level of performance. In the adult horse, diarrhea may occasionally be seen. Gastric ulcers, when clinically significant, can result in a loss of performance and affect the overall well-being of the horse. Because treating equine ulcers can be expensive, it's important to know whether or not your horse actually has an ulcer problem.

To accurately diagnose gastric ulcers, endoscopy of the stomach (gastroscopy) is performed. This procedure requires a 10-foot endoscope which allows direct visualization of the stomach. With gastroscopy, a doctor can see the areas of the stomach where ulcers occur and assess the severity of any found. Pilchuck now has the equipment and doctors trained in performing this procedure. With our new video-endoscope, the doctor can see the stomach lining on a television monitor and is able to take pictures during the procedure, which can be used for comparison to determine the extent of the disease or healing on subsequent examinations.

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11308 92nd Street SE - Snohomish, Washington 98290

NEWTRENDS IN EQUINE DENTISTRY

Traditionally, horses have had their teeth floated on a yearly or every other year timetable. Recent studies have shown that a minimal float may not find other existing problems that could result in tooth loss. State-of-the-art equine dental care has changed, and new technology is now available. A complete oral exam, in combination with new equipment, allows your veterinarian to treat dental disease & decay, and to prevent early tooth loss. By preventing tooth loss, the horse benefits in better nutrition & performance. The owner benefits by avoiding expensive procedures, such as an extraction or treatment of a sinus infection, in their horse.

If your horse is experiencing any of the following, the solution to the problem may be a dental one:

Resistance to the bit	Painful bumps around face
Head shaking	Rearing
Weight loss	Difficulty chewing
Dropping food (quidding)	Slow loss of baby teeth
Bad odor in mouth	Abnormal eruption of adult teeth

Pilchuck offers a full complement of dental services, which includes treatment of periodontal disease, restoration of decayed or fractured teeth, extractions, x-rays, endoscopy, oral surgery, plus regularly scheduled exams for floating & routine dental care.

STOMACH ULCERS IN HORSES, *continued*

GastroGard (omeprazole paste) is the most effective way to treat ulcers. Zantac (ranitidine) may be used with some success as well. With GastroGard, the treatment course is generally 28 days, followed by gastroscopy to assess healing. Most horses with clinically significant ulcers respond well to treatment and clinical signs can be expected to resolve. If you feel your horse may be at risk for gastric ulcers, please feel free to call our equine department to discuss the problem with one of our doctors.

VISIT OUR WEB SITE

for more articles & event news to help keep you informed about your horse's health & well-being

www.pilchuckvet.com

THE ALTERNATIVE APPROACH

Chiropractic care is a rapidly growing field of veterinary medicine in which a holistic approach is used to treat the health and performance problems of the horse. By helping to alleviate pain in the back and neck, as well as improving the general health of the nervous system, chiropractic care is an excellent addition to traditional veterinary medicine and surgery. In equine athletes, chiropractic examinations are valuable in detecting and treating gait abnormalities and performance limiting lameness. It is especially beneficial for horses showing a decreased level of performance, such as behavioral changes (e.g., acting "cinchy," bucking, or refusing jumps), short striding, cross cantering, or having difficulty with flexion and lateral movements. Chiropractic treatment also aids immensely in horses recovering from a musculoskeletal injury or as supportive care for horses with chronic problems such as arthritis and laminitis. A chiropractic examination provides expertise in evaluation of back and joint problems, and is an excellent non-invasive alternative treatment for various musculoskeletal disorders.

In conjunction with chiropractic care, proper saddle fit is essential for an equine athlete to perform at its best. Ensuring that the saddle fits properly on your horse's back reduces the likelihood of back pain and injury. For horses with chronic back pain or reoccurring performance limiting behavior, a possible cause may be poor saddle fit. The horse's back should be evaluated and the saddle should be inspected both on and off the horse. Examination of the horse carrying a saddle and rider is often needed to fully ascertain the cause of the problem, and to properly correct it.

Holistic treatments such as acupuncture and Chinese herbal remedies are showing excellent results in horses. Acupuncture, considered a new or alternative medicine by many of us, has actually been practiced for over 3,500 years in China on both animals and humans. It is not only safe, but is a favored treatment for one-quarter of the world's population. Veterinarians are increasingly combining acupuncture with Western treatments and medications. Acupuncture acts by stimulating specific spots in the body with needles, lasers, heat, and massages to balance energy (referred to as Qi) and promote healing. It focuses on the horse as a whole, physically, mentally, & emotionally, not just on specific parts. Instead of focusing on alleviating symptoms, it works to resolve the cause of the problem. In horses it can be used as treatment of musculoskeletal disorders, medical problems, and even behavioral problems. Acupuncture can be done alone or in conjunction with herbal therapy.

Like acupuncture, herbal medicine can be used for any diagnosed medical condition but tends to be most effective for interior syndromes. There are hundreds of established formulas and individual herbs so, unlike pharmaceuticals, a treatment specific to the patient can be administered. Because many of the ingredients are plant based, most horses eat them readily when mixed with their feed. Unlike acupuncture, where it may take a few appointments to see results, herbal remedies often see results within a few days.

Veterinary chiropractic, acupuncture, and Chinese herbal medicine treatment options are available at Pilchuck through two of our equine ambulatory practitioners. Both doctors have undergone advanced training, and offer the holistic approach to small animals, as well as to horses & other large animals.