

COMSTOCK EQUINE HOSPITAL

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Health
CHRONICLE



Wellness Exam: Beyond the Basics

Maria Collins DVM

Spring is just around the corner and scheduling those spring vaccinations may be on your mind. Remember vaccination appointments are more than just a needle poke for immunizations, although your horse may only see it as such. It is an annual physical examination by your veterinarian, who is examining and monitoring things you may not even be aware of. Our patients may not talk, but they can speak to us through a well done exam. It is also a great opportunity for our clients to address any of their concerns or questions regarding general health or management issues. We understand the close relationship our clients have with their horses and value your opinion.

A general visual from nose to tail is the first thing we are evaluating. Maybe winter was a little too good to the waistline, as we evaluate the body condition score of your horse. Maintaining a healthy weight is critical for preventing metabolic associated conditions such as laminitis. On the opposite side, maybe your horse did not fare as well during the winter and opens the discussion of weight loss. Current ration and nutrition evaluation are vital to the health of your horse. We evaluate the hair coat for signs of systemic or topical disease. A TPR (temperature, pulse, respiration) is taken to make sure your horse is healthy enough for vaccination. Putting a stethoscope on your horse routinely also allows us to detect any heart murmurs or arrhythmias that may have developed.

The saying "no foot, no horse" is always true as we examine hoof and shoeing balance. Your veterinarian and farrier can work together, often with x-ray assistance, to give your horse the best foot health for soundness. As our senior horse population continues to grow, we are often evaluating locomotion and giving a general pain assessment. Further recommendations for a complete lameness workup and medical management options may be discussed.

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**Merging Practice:
Bringing You a Unified Veterinary Team**

We hope you all are enjoying the New Year and would like to take this opportunity to let you know what has been happening at Comstock Equine Hospital. Last April we acquired Great Basin Equine from Dr. Marty Gardner. Dr. Brian Peck and Dr. Maria Collins have remained and will conduct business as usual. Dr. Shane Miller will be providing services at both facilities. He will see appointments at Comstock Equine Hospital Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday and at Great Basin Equine Monday and Friday. He will also continue to be available for emergency surgery at both facilities. Our goal with this merger is to provide excellent care to all of our clients and patients in the Northern Nevada area. We look forward to assisting you with your large animal veterinary needs! 🐾

3rd Annual Spring Horse Expo

Saturday May 16th, 10am - 2pm

Bartley Ranch Horse Arena



We are excited to bring you the 3rd Annual Spring Horse Expo. Join us for a morning of local horse organizations, local vendors, breed and discipline demonstrations, and informative lectures. Look for more information on participating groups and businesses on our Facebook page. If you are interested in having a booth or participating in the demonstrations, please email us at comstocklargeanimalhospital@yahoo.com. 🐾



The Importance of Routine Dental Care

Elisabeth M. Lau DVM

Dental care is one of the most important but often overlooked areas of equine veterinary medicine. Horses were designed to graze, thus necessitating the importance of teeth that can grind forages evenly and efficiently. As our horses are living well into their thirties, it is crucial to maintain healthy dentition from an early age.

Routine dental examinations are the key to assessing your horse's need for dentistry. A very basic examination includes obtaining a thorough history, physical examination, evaluation of the incisors and their alignment, and evaluation of facial symmetry. It cannot be stressed enough that a complete dental examination cannot be done without sedation and an oral speculum. A horse's molars extend to the curve of the jaw, and digital palpation alone can only evaluate for enamel points along the first 2-3 cheek teeth. Other pathologies such as wave mouth, fractured teeth, and severe overgrowths such as steps and ramps would be missed without this complete exam.

Once any dental pathologies have been identified and recorded in your horse's medical record, dental equilibration (formerly known as "floating") is performed. This can be done with hand or power tools. The determination of which tools to be used is a personal preference of the veterinarian performing the dentistry and specific to the patient and its needs. The benefit to using hand tools is that they cannot cause overheating of the tooth, and they do not require electricity; however the downside is that hand tools require more time which can lead to the need for more sedation for your horse and more time in the speculum. The benefit to power tools is that they take more tooth in less time with less vibration. This can mean the need for less sedation, less time in the speculum, and more comfortable procedures for geriatric horses. However, it is important to note that power tools in the wrong hands can be very detrimental to your horse's teeth. Excessive tooth loss and thermal necrosis can lead to oral pain, inability to chew properly, and tooth root infections. All of our veterinarians have received extensive training in equine dentistry. It is also important to address that the practice of lay dentistry (or dentistry performed by a non-veterinarian or non-licensed technician) is illegal in the state of Nevada. While many lay dentists have attended proper training, there are those out there that have not and can cause irreparable damage.

How often a horse requires dentistry varies from horse to horse and at different stages of life. Foals should have a basic evaluation as their teeth erupt to ensure they do not develop malalignments (i.e. overbites and underbites) or retained caps that can cause sores. Performance horses should have thorough examinations and dental equilibration performed annually or more frequently to ensure there is no source of discomfort that would keep the horse from performing at its best. Maintenance dentistry should be performed every 1-2 years while performance and corrective dentistry should be performed every 6-12 months allowing for minimal adjustments more often that will keep your horse more comfortable. Your veterinarian can help guide you to making the best plan for your horse and its dental needs.

For questions regarding dental examinations and procedures, do not hesitate to contact your veterinarian. 🐾

Wellness Exam

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Every horse should have an annual sedated dental speculum exam or at a frequency as recommended by your veterinarian. Parasite prevention and control is also an important component to your horses' health. With increasing parasite resistance, we are recommending targeted parasite control which includes routine fecal exams.

Last but not least, a vaccination program will be recommended based on the AAEP's core and risk based immunization schedule. With ever improving advances in vaccine research, you may notice changes in how your horse has been vaccinated and with what products over the past and coming years.

Remember breed, life stage, activity level, general housing and environment are all taken into consideration when your veterinarian is making specific health care recommendations for your horse. As research and growth in equine veterinary medicine continues, we continue to advance in the health care of your horse. We look forward to seeing you and your horses this spring for their wellness exam, vaccinations, dentals, and other health care needs. 🐾

To Breed or Not to Breed: Breeding Soundness Examination

Kristi M. Ruby DVM

Breeding season is about to get started! Whether this is your first time breeding a mare, or you are a seasoned veteran, here are some important things to know before breeding.

First, where and when do we start? Mares are considered "seasonally polyestrous" which means that they cycle regularly during the spring and summer months but often will not have heat cycles during the late fall and winter. The natural breeding season in mares runs from about March to June each year. However, our breeding season for performance horses often starts as early as February. Mares will begin to cycle in the spring as the length of daylight increases. If you are looking to breed your mare early in the year such as February or March, it is recommended to artificially increase their length of daylight starting around December or 2 months prior to breeding. By installing bright lights in the horses stall you can increase the amount of daylight perceived by your horse, in order to help them start cycling. The light should only be present for 18 hours per day. Meaning if there is naturally 10 hours of daylight, your artificial lights need only be on for an additional 8 hours, not all night. Mares can also be bred after June or July but obtaining pregnancy can be increasingly difficult due to the fact that the mares can go into a transitional phase in which they will not ovulate. The best results and success of breeding are usually obtained between March and June.

Mares will show signs of heat such as urinating more frequently or "winking" their vulva after urinating. Some mares will exhibit behavioral or attitude changes during their heat cycle as well. Once you notice your mare to be exhibiting signs of heat, it is good to contact your veterinarian at that time, even if you are not looking to breed for another 1-2 months. Ideally, your horse will have a "breeding soundness exam" performed on the heat cycle prior to the one you wish to breed her.

A breeding soundness exam entails a physical exam, sedation, rectal palpation and rectal ultrasound of the reproductive tract. Although some mares are very good for reproductive palpation and ultrasound, your veterinarian will likely sedate the mare unless he or she has previously worked on your mare without sedation. Sedation allows the veterinarian to get a better rectal palpation and ultrasound of the reproductive tract. The sedation also allows the mare to be more relaxed and calm during the procedure which decreases the chances of any adverse events such as a rectal tear. It is not only for your veterinarian's safety but also for your mares! Your veterinarian will palpate both ovaries and the uterine tract, followed by an ultrasound of the entire tract. This will help determine where the mare is currently in her cycle. The uterus will also be evaluated for any signs of abnormalities such as uterine cysts which could impede pregnancy. The external genitalia will then be cleaned and sterilely prepared in order to take a swab of the uterus for culture and cytology. The culture and cytology will be submitted in order to look for any signs of infection or abnormal cells within the uterus. These are best done when your mare is in heat, as this is the time the cervix is open and allows for the swab to be placed into the uterus without any trauma. Timing wise, this is best done on the heat cycle prior to the one in which you wish to breed so that you have enough time to get results before breeding your mare. Depending on the mare's age, abnormal breeding soundness findings, or history of difficulty breeding, your veterinarian may also perform further diagnostics such as a uterine biopsy and hysteroscopy (endoscopy of the uterus).

A breeding soundness exam does not guarantee your mare will take the first time. However, it will give you an idea if there are any abnormalities that may make it more difficult for your mare to become pregnant. After your breeding soundness exam, your veterinarian can guide you step by step on how the breeding process will go. As always, if you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact your veterinarian. 🐾

SPRING VACCINE CLINIC SCHEDULE

Area	Day	Date
Washoe Valley	Tues	3-Mar
Washoe Valley	Sat	7-Mar
Washoe Valley	Wed	18-Mar
Washoe Valley	Tues	31-Mar
Washoe Valley	Thurs	2-Apr
Washoe Valley	Sat	11-Apr
SW Reno	Wed	4-Mar
SW Reno	Sat	14-Mar
SW Reno	Thurs	19-Mar
SW Reno	Tues	24-Mar
SW Reno	Wed	1-Apr
SW Reno	Sat	18-Apr
Mt. Rose/Pleasant Valley	Thurs	5-Mar
Mt. Rose/Pleasant Valley	Tues	17-Mar
Mt. Rose/Pleasant Valley	Thurs	2-Apr
Mt. Rose/Pleasant Valley	Sat	4-Apr
Lemmon/Antelope Valley	Tues	3-Mar
Lemmon/Antelope Valley	Thurs	19-Mar
Lemmon/Antelope Valley	Wed	25-Mar
Lemmon/Antelope Valley	Sat	28-Mar
Spanish Springs	Thurs	5-Mar
Spanish Springs	Tues	17-Mar
Spanish Springs	Sat	21-Mar
Spanish Springs	Wed	1-Apr
North Valleys	Thurs	12-Mar
North Valleys	Tues	24-Mar
Golden/Sun Valley	Tues	10-Mar
Golden/Sun Valley	Wed	25-Mar
Carson/Dayton	Tues	10-Mar
Carson/Dayton	Thurs	26-Mar
Toll Rd/VC Highlands	Thurs	12-Mar
Toll Rd/VC Highlands	Tues	31-Mar
West Reno/Verdi-Mogul	Wed	11-Mar
West Reno/Verdi-Mogul	Thurs	26-Mar
Palomino Valley	Mon	16-Mar
Palomino Valley	Mon	6-Apr
Gardnerville	Mon	9-Mar
Gardnerville	Fri	3-Apr
Minden	Mon	23-Mar
Minden	Fri	17-Apr
Genoa/Jacks Valley	Fri	27-Mar
Stagecoach/Silver Springs	Fri	20-Mar

Price List	
Farm Call	15
Physical/Wellness Exam	15
Rhino-Influenza	29
Strangles I.N.	32
Rabies	21
Deworm	17-24
Deworm (Foal/Mini)	14
Fecal Exam	23
Clean Sheath	30
Sedation- Starts At	45
Coggins	30
Health Certificate	44
Additional on H.C.	13

A 10% discount will be applied to owners with 5 or more horses, and the farm call fee will be waived. Not applicable with any other discount.

Zoetis Immunization Support Guarantee: Zoetis Animal Health will pay for diagnostic & treatment costs up to \$5000.00 for your horse if he or she has been vaccinated by one of our doctors and becomes infected by West Nile, Influenza, Tetanus, Eastern Equine Encephalitis and/or Western Equine Encephalitis within one year of vaccination. This guarantee excludes Strangles and Rhino virus.



\$150.00

New Dentistry Pricing

We are now offering our "Dental Special" pricing of \$150 plus sedatives all year long! Sheath cleanings may be added for the discounted price of \$30.

\$100.00

We are also introducing the Dental Health Maintenance Plan. Any horse that has dentistry performed annually will receive the discounted price of \$100 plus sedatives. This plan is ideal for horses that require more frequent dentistry. To best service our clients, all of our doctors have received extensive training and continuing education opportunities in the field of equine dentistry.

The discounted price includes:

- 🐾 Sedation Examination
- 🐾 Full Mouth Speculum Examination
- 🐾 Dental Equilibration (performed with hand and power tools)