

It's Not Simply Floating Anymore

Good dental health is vital to your horse's overall wellbeing and is essential to the proper functioning of the digestive system. Because digestion is a complex process that begins with chewing and mixing of food stuffs with saliva, it is extremely important that your horse can chew properly. As it is in other mammals including humans, oral health cannot and should not be separated from the health of the rest of the body. Dental and oral diseases are almost entirely preventable in all species. Due to the advancements in equine health, horses live into their thirties making it even more important that your veterinarian provides your horse with routine preventative care. Some of the main causes of training problems and resistance are oral abnormalities causing pain. Abnormal dentation occlusion often causes trochlear mandibular joint pain which can be best diagnosed by your veterinarian with local anesthesia of the affected area. Some common problems that may be addressed during regular maintenance include:

- * Sharp enamel points forming on cheek teeth, causing lacerations or abrasions on the cheeks or tongue.
- * Retained caps (deciduous teeth that are not shed).
- * Hooks and ramps forming on the first upper and last lower cheek teeth
- * Pulpitis or endodontic exposure like occlusal pulp horn exposure.
- * Lost and/or broken teeth
- * Abnormally long teeth
- * Infected teeth and/or gums
- * Misalignment of the mouth/poor apposition (can be due to congenital defects or injury).
- * Periodontal pocketing of feed and other evidence of periodontal (gum) disease.
- * Loss of feed from mouth while eating, difficulty chewing or excessive salivation.
- * Loss of body condition, weight loss.
- * Large or undigested feed particles in manure.
- * Head tilting or tossing, bit chewing, tongue rolling, fighting the bit or resisting bridling.
- * Poor performance such as lugging on the bridle, failing to turn or stop, even bucking.
- * Refusing to take a lead.
- * Foul odor from mouth or nostrils or traces of blood from the mouth.
- * Nasal discharge or swelling of the face, jaw or mouth tissues.

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