



# Herd This?



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## Equine Herpesvirus-I in North Carolina

North Carolina had their first confirmed neurologic case of EHV-1 (equine herpesvirus-1) on January 5, 2012. The mare, which was referred to NCSU-CVM from Rockingham County in north central NC, presented with neurologic symptoms consistent with EHV-1 and therefore went straight into isolation at NCSU-CVM. As many precautionary measures were taken as possible to prevent the spread of this highly contagious disease once at NCSU-CVM and there have been no other horses to show symptoms as of publication of this article.

In this issue of Herd This?, we will focus on EHV-1 and explain what it is, the symptoms, treatment, and prevention.



### UPCOMING NEWS AND EVENTS:

**Pineview is encouraging routine dental care by offering a 20% discount on dentistry scheduled in March. This means if your horse is on the wellness program, then you can double up and get 30% off!**

**Pineview is going to offer one Saturday a month for haul-in, scheduled appointments from 8-12 in March and April. Our dates are:**

**March 24th  
April 28th**

**Please call Donna at the office to set up your appointment to have your horses seen on these dates.**

## EHV-1: What Is It?

EHV-1 is a highly contagious form of herpes virus that can cause respiratory disease, abortions in mares, and on rare occasion, neurologic disease. The respiratory form of the disease is actually pretty common and most horses have been exposed at some point in their life (usually when they were younger). The reproductive form of EHV is not uncommon either, and causes abortions in mares as well as weak neonatal foals. The neurologic form however was exceptionally rare until last spring when a horse that went to the National Cutting



**An aborted fetus from an EHV-1 infected mare**

Horse Association's Western National Championship in Ogden, Utah broke with the disease and many horses from the show had been

exposed and developed symptoms. Approximately 25% of states in the US have reported cases since the onset of the outbreak and now North Carolina has joined those ranks.

**A horse in a sling that is affected by EHV-1**



## Neurologic EHV-1 Symptoms and Treatment



“Dogsitting” can be a symptom of EHV-1

### Prevention:

- Clean and disinfect water buckets and trailers
- Avoid nose-to-nose contact with other horses
- Cleaning and disinfecting stalls between horses
- Minimizing people movement between horses
- Isolate new arrivals for at least 21 days and take temperatures on them daily
- Check your destination for recent EHV-1 cases



The incubation period for EHV-1 is from 4-14 days and the neurologic form of EHV-1 usually presents initially with a fever (over 102) and a slight nasal discharge and/or cough. This is followed by neurologic symptoms 8-12 days later such as incoordination, extreme lethargy, inability to stand, loss of tail tone, urine dribbling, head tilt, and/or difficulty urinating and defecating.

The neurologic form can look like many other neurologic diseases such as sleeping sickness, west nile virus, rabies, or brain tumors, therefore, testing is critical to differentiate it from other diseases. The clinical signs are usually at their worst about 24-48 hours after

neurologic symptoms start and the disease can be fatal, especially if the horse cannot get up.

The primary treatment is supportive care (anti-inflammatories and IV fluids) and in some situations antivirals and/or antibiotics. Because these treatments work better earlier in the disease, please call your veterinarian if you notice any of these symptoms or if you notice your horse has a fever over 101.5.



### Symptoms:

- Fever over 102
- Slight nasal discharge +/- cough
- Incoordination
- Extreme lethargy
- Inability to stand
- Urine dribbling
- Head tilt
- Loss of tail tone
- Difficulty defecating

## Neurologic EHV-1 Prevention

There are vaccines available for the respiratory and reproductive forms of EHV, but there is no vaccine available to prevent the neurologic form of the disease.

Therefore, the best prevention is good husbandry practices such as using your own water buckets and disinfecting them between uses, not rubbing noses with other horses at events, not stalling horses where other horses have been if you have a choice (and disinfecting stalls if you do have to use them behind another horse), cleaning and disinfecting trailers after transportation, and minimizing people movement between horses.

An appropriate disinfectant for buckets and trailers is a 1:10 dilution of bleach:water and for clothing, wash them in hot water with a detergent and then dry as normal.

If you are a barn owner, enforcing a 21-30 day isolation period to assure that the new animal is not bringing anything into your established herd can prevent disasters later. Taking temperatures at least daily on these new additions is also helpful as it can cue you in that a disease is brewing and is often the first symptom with several diseases.

In addition, if you do show and travel frequently or if you are going to a new area, check and make sure there have not been any cases of EHV-1 near your destination and consider altering your plans if there have been cases at the facility or nearby. A good place to check the spread of the disease in any state is: [http://www.aaep.org/us\\_canada\\_statehealthoffices.htm](http://www.aaep.org/us_canada_statehealthoffices.htm)

For horses at high risk (ie those showing or trailriding in

an area where it has been confirmed), we recommend vaccinating them against the other forms of EHV in the hopes that the amount of viral shedding will be decreased and to hopefully lessen the symptoms if they do occur (although there is no research to prove this). If you have further questions about your specific situation, don't hesitate to call.



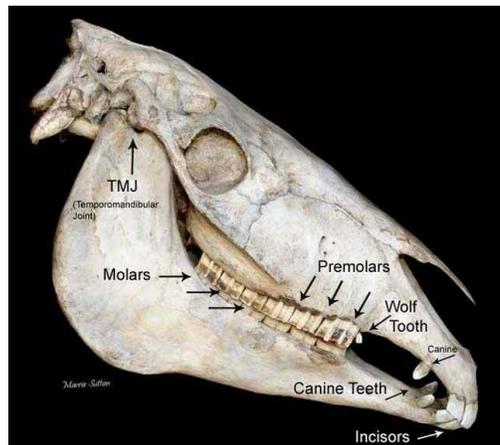
Severe depression is one symptom of EHV-1

## Why Does My Horse Need A Dentistry?

This is a common question we get from owners when we recommend doing annual dentistries. Therefore, the focus of this article is to explain the basic anatomy of the horse's mouth so you will know why your horse needs a dentistry, when a dentistry is needed, how we check a horse's mouth, and what we actually do. Hopefully this will simplify the process and answer any questions you may have.

The anatomy first...horses are designed to eat grass. They have front teeth (incisors) that you see when you part their lips that are used for grasping grass and feed. They also have canine teeth (usually only present in males) that are in the space behind the incisors and are often sharp and actually serve no functional purpose for the horse. Lastly, they have cheek teeth that you cannot easily see but extend all the way back to underneath your horse's eyes! The majority of dental issues occur with the cheek teeth and therefore cannot be seen without a thorough exam.

God created horses with a lower jaw (and therefore a dental arcade) that is narrower than their upper arcade. In addition, their permanent teeth are a certain length when they are born and they will continuously grow out over the lifespan of the horse and eventually, when they are old, the teeth fall out. Horses chew from side to side which, coupled with their anatomy, creates a wear pattern where the outside of their upper arcade and the inside of the lower arcade develop sharp points. These sharp points can cause ulcers in your horse's mouth that are painful and lead to many of the symptoms you may see (dropping feed, resistance to the bit, head turning while eating, etc.). However, horses, like us, have different pain thresholds therefore some can have severe ulcers in their mouths and never show any of the signs listed above. This leads us to our second point...when does your horse need a dentistry?



Generally, we recommend your horse have their first dentistry around the age of 2 years when they are likely going to begin training. This way we can see if their permanent teeth are erupting normally, remove wolf teeth (the small teeth located just in front of the first large cheek teeth that often causes discomfort with the bit), and remove sharp points so that the young horse is not in any oral pain as training starts (this helps eliminate dental issues as a reason for poor training behavior proactively). We then recommend doing dentistries on an annual basis. However, there are sensitive horses that need it more frequently and other horses that wear their teeth differently and need it less frequently.



Unfortunately, the only way to be thorough in checking a horse's teeth is to put a full mouth speculum on them and examine all the teeth all the way back to those teeth below the eyes. This is critical because often the back teeth have severe issues that cannot be determined by pulling the tongue out the side of the mouth and looking at the first cheek teeth. Some horses allow this but others are resistant to it without sedation so really a thorough oral exam requires sedation to perform. With that said, we will often look at the first cheek teeth to determine if there is an obvious need, but be aware that there are limitations to this sort of quick check. Because of this, we recommend doing dentistries annually and if we realize after a year or two that your horse can go longer then we prolong that recommendation.

So what do we actually do when we perform a dentistry? First we sedate the horse so that we can do a thorough job and so the horse is comfortable. Our goal is for them to remain standing and comfortable for the entire procedure. Then we put a full mouth speculum on the horse and examine the mouth using our hands so we can feel how sharp the points are or other abnormalities. We will also use a bright light to look for any abnormalities we may not be able to feel and show you the abnormalities we find.

We use Powerfloats, drill-looking pieces of equipment with rotary bits, to grind the teeth efficiently without damaging the gums around the teeth. Occasionally we may use "hand floats", if there is an area we cannot get to with the Powerfloats. Next we address major issues like large hooks in the front or back, wavemouths, or missing teeth. Then we smooth all the sharp points on the lower and upper arcades and round the first premolars to give them "bit seats" which allow the bit to rest in the proper location with minimal discomfort. Then the speculum is removed and the front incisors are inspected and reduced if needed and the tartar is removed from the canine teeth if it is present. Different veterinarians may do these in different orders, but all these areas are addressed each time a dentistry is done.

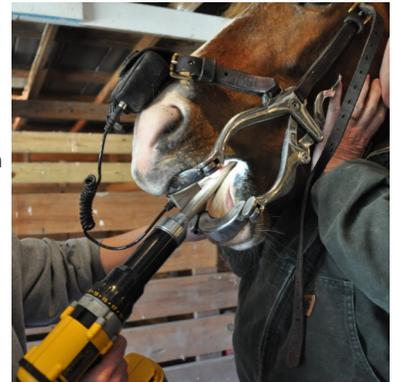


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## Why Does My Horse Need A Dentistry Cont.

Certainly there is a lot more to dentistries, but this is an overview, designed to answer questions you may have about what we do as well as why it should be done to your horse on a routine basis. It is much better to be proactive and do routine dentistries to prevent problems than to address issues after you see symptoms like dropping feed and weight loss because often those issues are difficult to address or cannot be completely corrected. If you have further questions, please feel free to contact us or certainly we can address them while we are doing your horse's dentistry and actually show you a lot of the things mentioned in this article. Additionally, there is a video we made that is available from our website at the following link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xMixUEwtbyU>. You can get to it easily by going to our website and clicking on the client education link and then select the special topics page.



*So whether you eat or  
drink or whatever you do,  
do it all for the glory of  
God.*

*1 Corinthians 10:31*

**Pineview Veterinary Hospital is a large animal veterinary practice meeting the needs of large animals in south-eastern North Carolina and northeastern South Carolina.**

**Our mission is to provide high quality service to our clients coupled with the most advanced and progressive veterinary care for our patients with an emphasis on preventive and herd health medicine.**

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## A Thank You Note and Exciting News from Dr. Long

Happy New Year!!! I trust that everyone had a wonderful and safe Christmas and New Year holiday. I hope that 2012 continues to bring you and your families great joy and happiness.

I cannot believe I have been working now for almost six months, as it has just flown past. I thank you all so much for making my transition into the Pineview Veterinary Hospital family smooth and wonderfully enjoyable. Everyone has helped me feel right at home and I appreciate it so very much.

On behalf of my husband (Dustin) and I, we would also like to thank everyone and inform you that we will be expecting twins this June! We are expecting a boy and a girl and are very excited at this time in our lives.

Eventually, this new chapter will bring a few adjustments to the Pineview Veterinary Hospital daily schedule but rest assured that you and your animal's needs will be taken care of as always.

Please let Heidi or myself know if there is ever anything that you need as we are always here to

serve you and your animals. Have a safe 2012 and I look forward to continuing to meet many of you if I have not already!!!

Best Wishes,  
Christine M. Long, DVM

