

MUD FEVER

Mud Fever is a simple “cover all” name for dermatitis – skin inflammation – most commonly of the pasterns but it can involve the cannons as well. It is most common in the winter months. Hind legs are most commonly affected and Mud Fever is most often seen on horses living in wet and/or dirty conditions. Some horses are more susceptible than others.

What causes it?

Mud Fever is caused by a complex variety of agents such as:

- ❖ various bacterial species
- ❖ fungal and yeast infections
- ❖ parasites
- ❖ immunological responses
- ❖ the body’s response to toxins.

Wet conditions allow the skin to develop small cracks due to chapping, which allows entry of the causative agents into the skin.

What are the symptoms?

Signs vary from reddening of the skin to heavy scabbing, swelling, cracks and weeping of the skin. Horses may show no lameness but some can become severely lame if the deeper tissues of the leg become involved. This is called cellulitis.

Reducing the risk to your horse

To reduce the risk of your horse getting Mud Fever, you should:

- ❖ Try to keep the legs as dry as possible, but your horse should not be stabled all of the time
- ❖ Overnight stabling on clean bedding can help. The legs should be cleaned and dried as well as possible each night
- ❖ If your horse is heavily feathered, consider clipping because the feather does not protect the leg, but traps dirt and infection on the skin.
- ❖ Apply a simple barrier cream before turning out
- ❖ Try one of the many remedies on the market. Speak to other horse owners to find out which ones they use. Regular stabling will give you an opportunity to use them.

If your prevention measures do not appear to be working and mud fever develops, contact us to discuss the problem as soon as possible. Early intervention usually gives a faster result and this will be more cost effective to you.

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