

Dear ESS clients,

It is that time of year when it is snowy and grey outside. Many of us are staying indoors more than going out to ride our horses and ALL of us are longing for sunny spring when we start getting ready for the riding season. This is the best time of year to leg up your horse, but not necessarily in the way you think. Now is the time to get your horse's basic veterinary care services performed so that when spring FINALLY arrives, you can hit the ground running. ESS is ready to help you out and is dedicating March as "Dental Awareness Month" and April as "Wellness Check Month."



We are extending our February "Obesity Awareness Month" special offers into March for all of you that missed out. Please see our last newsletter. Our participants enjoyed using their new saddle pads!

### **Our New Special offers include:**

#### March Dental Awareness Month

1. Free Dental Exam (usually \$45)
2. 20% discount on dental x-rays if needed
3. \$100 Electronic Dental Float (usually \$150)
4. \$30 sedation (usually \$50)
  - a. Additional sedation if needed will be at no charge
5. \$20 sheath cleaning under the same sedation (usually \$55)

Package price: \$150

### April Wellness Check Month

1. Free Vaccine Exam (usually \$15)
2. \$125 6-way vaccine (usually \$200).
  - a. This vaccine includes all the recommended spring vaccines in one shot (Eastern Equine Encephalomyelitis, Western Equine Encephalomyelitis, Equine Herpes viruses, Equine Influenza viruses, Tetanus Toxoid, and West Nile Virus).
3. \$125 Enrollment in the Equine “Early Detection Program,” which includes
  - a. FREE biannual Coggin’s tests,
  - b. Fecal Egg Count Test to determine if your horse needs deworming,
  - c. Equine Blood Panel
    - i. Biochemistry to evaluate internal organ function
    - ii. Complete Blood Cell Count to monitor for systemic or inflammatory diseases

Package price: \$250

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In light of this month’s awareness, here are some fun dental facts.

Much like our own teeth, the components of the equine tooth include dentin, cementum, and enamel. Pulp is contained within the tooth body, which extends down into the root of the tooth. This pulp is very important in that it contains the main blood and nerve supply to the tooth.

There are three different types of teeth in the equine mouth which include the incisors (front teeth used to bite off forage), canines (“fighting teeth”), and cheek teeth (premolars and molars used to grind food). What your horse eats will discolor the teeth and the soft tissues of the mouth. It is normal to have teeth with dark streaks or areas of the soft tissues that have been discolored by the pigments contained within forage and dirt.

Being herbivores, horse cheek teeth erupt over an entire lifetime at approximately 1/8 inch per year to compensate for constant chewing. When a chewing surface is not level or misaligned, abnormal wear patterns develop. Waves, ramps, and hooks are all consequences of an abnormal chewing surface that can damage the soft tissues within the mouth. If a tooth becomes overly worn, a horse can lose the tooth. This commonly happens with old age.



The bit you use in your horse's mouth during riding should never hit a tooth. Proper bit placement places pressure on the bars, tongue, and corners of the mouth. If your bit is hitting teeth, you should consider lowering the bit in the mouth or finding a differently shaped bit. It is a common myth that a "bit seat" needs to be created. Although ESS may reduce hooks associated with the teeth that come very close to where the bit usually sits, we do not believe in excessively grinding this area. This can cause severe pain and death of the tooth.

ESS's goal is to keep the dental arcade balanced and your horse's mouth pain free. After performing a thorough oral examination (+/- dental x-rays) to determine your horse's specific dental needs, we will use a specialized tool to meticulously rasp/file the sharp enamel edges and to reduce hooks to prevent ulceration of the soft tissues and thereby alleviate pain within your horse's mouth.

Equine dentistry has undergone rapid technological developments in the last few years, which has attracted a lot of attention. There has been a renewed understanding in how proper dental alignment, dental health, and oral comfort affect your horse's performance. So, what is the difference between having a veterinarian and a lay equine dentist perform these tasks?

Concomitant with the demand for equine dentistry that utilizes new-age tools, lay "equine dentists" have started to perform equine dentistry around the country. These individuals, although having been trained at a "special" school, have been misrepresented to the public as experts. Please be aware that their certification may only include a one week course from a school that has not been accredited. More importantly, these people are practicing veterinary medicine without a medical license.

According to the American Association of Equine Practitioners, "Veterinary dentistry is a function of veterinary practice because it requires diagnosis and treatment, and, to be fully effective, demands extensive knowledge of anatomy, anesthesiology, pharmacology, physiology, pathology, radiology, neurology, medicine, and surgery that is part of the graduate veterinarian's training."

Dental problems can affect other areas of your horse's body than just his/her mouth. This is the most important reason why a veterinarian should provide your horse's dental procedures. Other internal health problems, behavioral issues, and lameness/performance problems may go hand-in-hand with a problematic mouth.

In summary, your horse's dental health is very important. Providing annual or biannual maintenance to your horse's mouth will make your horse MUCH happier!

Please do not hesitate to contact ESS with any questions you may have. We are happy to discuss any concerns you may have.

Sincerely,

Brittany Factor, DVM