

August 2020

WOUNDS!



Unfortunately, if you have a horse, pony or donkey at some point you are likely to have to respond to a wound on said animal. This may be a mild abrasion to a severe laceration. At Summerleaze we are always available to attend wounds as needed or to provide advice over the phone.

What wounds require urgent veterinary care?

- Wounds close to joints
- Wounds associated with a horse's eye
- Wounds with uncontrollable bleeding
- Wounds where underlying structures are visible such as bone or tendon
- Penetrating wounds for example with sticks or nails
- Wounds associated with lameness
- Any wound you are concerned about!

What should I do whilst waiting for a vet if my horse has a wound?

If it is safe to do so you can start cleaning the wound with water and if bleeding pressure can be applied to the wound with a clean bandage. Please do not apply purple spray or similar to a wound whilst waiting for a vet as it can make it harder to assess the wound.

Are all skin wounds stitchable?

Not all wounds require stitching, they may be too shallow for it to be required. The skin may also be under too much pressure to stitch successfully in the field. If the wound is over somewhere highly moveable for example the fetlock your vet may also decide the sutures are unlikely to hold. The ideal time to stitch a wound is within 6 hours of it occurring but is still potentially an option up to 12 hours, if the wound is older than that it is unlikely to be a candidate for suturing. If there is a worry that the wound may be heavily contaminated it would also not be a candidate for suturing.



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01297 304007

What is proud flesh?

Proud flesh is the term used for excessive granulation tissue. The skin is unable to grow over the top of this tissue, preventing complete wound closure. It is most commonly a feature on wounds on the distal limbs and on areas that are highly mobile. It can also be a feature in wounds that have had issues with infection. It can occur in wounds that have been left open that ideally should initially have been sutured close or bandaged. It is often treated by surgical debridement as there are no nerves present in this tissue so it is painless to remove it. Proud flesh and sarcoid tissue can look very similar so your vet may wish to differentiate between the two with a biopsy.

Can you use hibiscrub or iodine to clean wounds?

It is perfectly acceptable to use either dilute hibiscrub or dilute iodine to clean minor wounds (major wounds should have a vet attend). It is important that wounds are cleaned as soon as they are discovered to reduce the risk of infection. If it is safe to do so it is also advisable to clip around minor wounds to help keep them clean.

What is cellulitis, why do some wounds cause it and why is it such an issue?

Cellulitis is a bacterial infection that results in a painful swelling of the horse's leg, heat and lameness. It can also cause the horse to become inappetent and to have an increased temperature. It can affect the horse on any part of the horse's body, not just the legs but is more commonly associated with leg wounds. It can require aggressive medical treatment to get rid of but typically treatment starts with antibiotics, anti inflammatories and gentle exercise. Cold hosing and bandaging may also be advised to treat the area. For a wound to cause cellulitis it only requires a small number of bacteria to gain entry through the wound.

Unfortunately, once a horse has had cellulitis, they are more likely to develop it again. In rare circumstances cellulitis can also cause laminitis as the horse is at risk initially from septic laminitis if the bacteria travel to the feet and from weight bearing laminitis if the horse is too painful to stand on the affected leg in the opposite leg. There is also a risk of dermal necrosis where the skin over the cellulitis dies away due to blood supply becoming compromised or a direct result of toxin production in the area. In some extreme cases the damage to a leg caused by cellulitis can result in long term lameness. Colic is also a risk in horses with cellulitis as anything that may stop a horse behaving normally in terms of eating, drinking and moving around can predispose them to colic.

If you are concerned about a wound please ring us on 01297 304007.

COVID-19 Update

Summerleaze Vets will continue to provide 24/7 emergency care as things continue. As well as urgent care we are now able to perform more routine work including but not limited to vaccinations, lameness work ups, dentals, reproductive work and surgical procedures. We are still available for telephone consultations and we can dispense medication and write prescriptions. We will continue to maintain social distancing to the best of our ability when out on visits, but we ask our clients to keep us informed if they have potentially developed symptoms or have been exposed to Covid-19 before we attend their animal. We would also like to remind our clients to try to help us keep our vets safe by minimising the number of people at our visits ideally to one, maintaining 2 meters away from our vets when possible and only having one person per horse on admittance and discharge of horses from the practice. At this time we are unable to have owners watch procedures within the practice.

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