

HOLISTICTM HORSE

INTEGRATIVE THERAPIES FOR HORSE AND RIDER

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Suncare for you and your horse

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Lori Day and Merlin on the beach at Saint Simons Island in Georgia. Three Andalusian stallions were on the beach that day, but Lori was the only rider wearing a visor to protect her from the sun. (Photo by Donna Mastrianni, www.donneandcavalli.com)

Do our horses feel sunburn the way we do and does it affect them the same way? Yes!

The skin is the largest organ we have. It helps regulate our proper body temperature, protects our organs from environmental damage and acts as our sensory information panel. The human epidermis contains 5 layers and each layer has a specific function. The equine epidermis has 5 to 7 layers of the same type. If you feel something on your skin then you know your horse does too!

Tips for you and your horse in the heat and sun:

1. Rinse off your horse with clean cool water at least twice a week, preferably daily if you are at sea level in 80+ degrees. They, as we, need to keep body temperatures regulated so we do not over heat.
2. Drink water. Take your weight, divide it in half. That is how many ounces your body needs to support health. Drink up! Our animals may need electrolytes in the summer in their water; ask your Vet first. Dehydration leaves us all weak, parched, and achy. Adding water is like adding oil to your car: everything inside and out just moves more smoothly!
3. You wear a hat, your horse a matching fly mask!
4. Let your horse have its tail and mane to swat flies. You of course will have a plastic fly swatter.
5. Apply sunscreen at least 30 minutes before going out in the sun and let it dry on your skin or your horses before going out.
6. Reapply sun block after washing off or sweating off.
7. Zinc block is the best for you and your horse. It comes in many forms and colors.



8. Aloe mixed with lavender will help heal sunburn.

9. Apple cider vinegar mixed with water acts as a toner to cut sweat and detour bugs. One part ACV to 8 parts water.

Sun care: What does SPF stand for? Sun protection factor, what exactly does that mean? About.com has great information on sun care as do many web sites such as The University of Utah's www.huntsmancancer.org web site. SPF numbers tell us how many hours of sun protection exposure we receive in one hour of unprotected exposure.

Do you know your ABC's?

A – Asymmetry: Normal moles or freckles are symmetrical, even on both ends. Skin cancer will not look the same on all sides.

B – Border: A mole or spot with jagged edges needs to be checked.

C – Color: A mole that is more than one hue is suspicious and needs to be evaluated by a doctor.

D – Diameter: If it is larger than a pencil eraser (about ¼ inch) it needs to be checked.

E – Elevation: A mole raised above the skin surface, or one with an uneven surface needs attention.

Also, if the spot or mole, bleeds, is scaly or rough, please go get it checked. Also take the time to look at your loved ones and friends which include your horses and dogs! If something does not look right please go get it checked!

The three main skin cancers are:

Melanoma which is the most deadly

Basal cell carcinoma is the most common, can spread locally, not metastasize.

Squamous cell carcinoma is the second most common. It can metastasize although not as commonly as melanoma.

Topical Antioxidants: Look for antioxidant vitamins infused into lotions and creams for face and body care as well as eating foods rich in antioxidants.

What do antioxidants do? They destroy free radicals. Antioxidants are knights in armor protecting and battling wind, sun, smoke, dirt, pesticides, and pollution, to name a few. Usually up to a 10% vitamin ratio to cream is good; anything higher can be on a prescription level or at least should be. These creams have been studied by the medical industry; yes, it does help to apply these creams to the skin to fight skin cancer. You can find these products everywhere. Read your label, ask questions before you buy. Since we are outside all year long, this is an item that we should all have in our medicine cabinet and tack box!

Antioxidants:

Vitamins, Co-Enzyme Q10, A, B, C, E, Selenium, Zinc, to name a few of the popular ones.

A sampling of foods rich in antioxidants:

Dried small red beans

Wild Bilberry and Blueberry's

Cranberries

Blackberry's

Raspberries

Garlic
Tomatoes
Oranges
Apples
Pecans
Plums
Russell Potatoes
Whole grains
Dark leafy green vegetables
Broccoli, spinach, sweet potatoes, red and yellow peppers, cantaloupes and mangoes
Red wine
Red Grape juice
Walnuts
Artichokes
Coffee

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