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### **Veterinary DON'TS**

Many of us have learned from Black Beauty to never ride your horse hard and put them up wet. As many of us horse addicts have found, horses can be very delicate creatures, despite their massive, impressive, and sometimes intimidating stature. While even the smallest, most innocent changes can be life threatening, calling the vet every time your horse lays down isn't economical either. Here are some veterinary DON'Ts for managing your horse at home.

DON'T wait to call if your horse has a cut near a joint or tendon (especially if there is a sticky, yellow clear fluid coming from it), or if your horse is walking on three legs. Please call us, no matter if it's Christmas morning! Any injury you are concerned about or seems to be significantly uncomfortable for your horse is worth inspection. Leg wounds can run the spectrum. They can need extensive medical care or a bandage and some cold hosing. We are happy to start with a phone call to help you assess the situation. Don't wait to see if your horse gets better.

DON'T let your horse (cow, goat, sheep etc.) get into the feed bin, or change feeds suddenly on him! Sweet feeds are especially dangerous in large quantities, particularly if it is not an appropriate feed for your horse or he is not adjusted to it.

It can result in colic and laminitis (or founder).

It can also cause laminitis in cattle, sheep and goats (ruminants). In ruminants, grain overload can also result in bloat, and polioencephalomalacia (deficiency of a type of vitamin B called thiamine)

DON'T give Acepromazine (Ace) to a colicky horse.

Veterinarians give a variety of sedatives that belong to different classes of pharmaceuticals, based on the patient, the disease, and the conditions requiring the sedation. Butorphanol (Torbugesic, or "torb"), for example, is an opioid with pain-relieving properties, while detomidine (Dormosedan or "dorm") and xylazine are referred to as "alpha-2's." While alpha-2's constrict blood vessels, acepromazine dilates them. This results in a drop in blood pressure. Especially in Florida, dehydration is always a primary concern, and giving a medication that results in a further drop in blood pressure can be fatal to a dehydrated, colicky horse.

DON'T give your horse "bute" (phenylbutazone) and Banamine (flunixin meglumine) together on the same day, unless instructed by an equine veterinarian.

It will likely result in the formation of stomach (gastric) ulcers, and if used together over time, horses can develop ulcers anywhere (and everywhere) from the mouth to the rectum. One of the most serious and significant syndromes in this category is right dorsal ulcerative colitis, a potentially fatal condition that, for some reason, develops with or without the use of particular drugs, including bute, banamine, and some antibiotics (including trimethoprim/sulfa or SMZs). Both bute and banamine are NSAIDs, or non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, and work along a similar pathway that results in reduced blood flow to the kidney, and layers of the intestine critical to prevention of ulcers. We've seen this almost happen when an owner has their horse on a regular regimen of bute, and the doctors don't know it when they prescribe them banamine. It can also sometimes happen if a veterinarian who is unfamiliar with horses is doing the prescribing. So bother us with your lameness concerns, instead of your friend/relative/neighbor who happens to be a small animal vet!

Another note about bute... DON'T give it to a horse under two years old.

Foals are very susceptible to a disease called "GDUD," gastro-duodenal ulcerative disease. Bute use in a foal can quickly lead to severe ulcers that can require extensive medical care or even be fatal. If you have a foal that has a significant lameness or puffy joint, call Springhill Equine to have them evaluated for possible OC(D) (osteocondrosis or osteocondrosis dessicans – a cartilage defect or flap that occurs in well-nutritioned young horses).

DON'T put any eye ointment containing steroids [this includes dexamethasone (DEX) and hydrocortisone (HC)] in a horse's eye that is painful, tearing, has a visible defect in the surface of the eye, or has a drooping, swollen eyelid.

Steroids prevent corneal ulcers from healing, and in many cases, make the ulcer worse. If your horse shows any signs of eye discomfort, you should be calling us immediately. The main exception to this rule includes horses previously DIAGNOSED with uveitis. Uveitis is a chronic inflammatory condition which is treated with steroid containing eye ointments. However, if you notice a difference in the level of pain between the two eyes, or you have any reason to suspect trauma or an ulcer in the eye, discontinue this medication. You may put triple antibiotic, "BNP" (bacitracin-neomycin-polymixin) ointment in an eye that is uncomfortable. However, if you are reaching for this tube of medication, you should be using your other hand to dial Springhill Equine's phone number!

DON'T mix any medication with banamine in a syringe or bottle and give it to your horse. On that note, never mix medications before giving them to your horse in general, unless instructed by a veterinarian.

Banamine has a tendency to react with many medications when mixed. The solutions will often turn cloudy. Never give an injection to your horse intravenously if the medication looks cloudy, has "stuff" in the bottom of the bottle, or is expired.

DON'T abuse and overuse antibiotics (or supplements for that matter).

Keep using past resolution of symptoms, don't discontinue prior to complete resolution and then some, don't change frequently or start and stop, don't keep giving if your horse develops diarrhea – call us. We're happy to discuss supplements that we recommend based on quality, reliability and performance.

DON'T forget to check your alfalfa thoroughly for blister beetles.

Blister beetles can result in a painful death for your horse. They live in hay.

\*Picture\*

DON'T plant oak, red maple, laurel cherry, yew, or ornamental flowers where your horse can access them.

If it is an ornamental, has waxy leaves, seed "pods" of some kind, or berries, it probably isn't something your horse should be eating.

Another dangerous plant tip... DON'T put your horse on black walnut shavings. It can result in laminitis.

DON'T try to give your horse an enema with a garden hose. This especially applies to foals. You can seriously damage your horse's outflow tract, the dirtiest, most bacteria-laden region of a horse's body! Your horse is unlikely to survive if you punch a hole in it.

DON'T expect your vet to give you an idea of how bad the damage is over the phone. If you are concerned about your animal, have us come to your house or get your special guy on the trailer and into the clinic as soon as possible.

We want to be able to give your horse and you the best course of action for his particular ailment, not what our psychic-vet-powers make us feel like he might have.