

## FIRST AID/VETERINARY CARE FOR THE WILDERNESS HORSE

Craig London, D.V.M, Rock Creek Pack Station, P.O. Box 248, Bishop, CA 93515

Email: [info@rockcreekpackstation.com](mailto:info@rockcreekpackstation.com) 760-872-8331 home: 760-873-6677

- I. Preparation prior to the trip to minimize any problems
  - A. Nutrition...get the animal used to the food that they'll eat on your trip
  - B. Physical conditioning...no fat horses, get in shape
  - C. Vaccinations
  - D. Behavioral conditioning...pickets, trailer rides, crossing water, drinking out of creeks
  
- II. Know the normal horse!.....compare at rest and work, compare with other animals on the trip subjected to same work and environmental conditions.
  - A. Temperature 99-101.5
  - B. Heart Rate 32-40
  - C. Respiratory Rate 8-16
  - D. Appetite, Stool #
  
- III. Treating the common problems
  - A. Musculoskeletal System
    1. Sole Bruise...Phenylbutazone 2 grams twice a day, pads and rest
    2. Cuts/abrasions...clean and wrap if lower leg. Antibiotic ointment topically
    3. Rope Burns...Prevent! Antibiotic ointment, wrap, phenylbutazone, antibiotics ?
    4. Tendon swelling...cold water, phenylbutazone, wrap, rest
    5. Puncture wounds...remove foreign object, flush and keep open. Antibiotics ok.
    6. Saddle sores...don't ride, change tack
    7. Tying Up Syndrome...rest, appropriate (low) levels of Banamine
    8. Infectious Joint Disease...start on antibiotics, keep wound open and draining
    9. Laminitis...Banamine or phenylbutazone twice a day, put in soft mud
  
  - B. Respiratory System
    1. Viral (Influenza or Rhino)...Phenylbutazone twice a day and rest
    2. Bacterial Pneumonia...antibiotics, Phenylbutazone and rest.
  
  - C. Gastrointestinal System
    1. Colic...control the pain, rest. Banamine, Rompun, minimize stress, hydrate
    2. Choke...no food 12-24 hours, give Banamine.
    3. Grain overload...Magnesium Sulfate (Epson Salts)..dose is 30-60 grams orally.

#### D. Eye Problems

1. Foreign Object...give 5 cc Rompun, remove and check for ulcer
2. Abrasion/ulcer...atropine ointment twice a day, antibiotic ointment three times a day. Give oral phenylbutazone or Banamine twice a day for pain control.
3. Uveitis...use dexamethasone/antibiotic eye ointment combination 6 times a day, atropine twice a day. Put animal on 10 cc Banamine im twice a day.

E. Snake Bite...rest, antibiotics? Banamine?

F. Poisonous Plants...keep from eating.

G. Allergies...skin bumps, hives.....use 10 cc Banamine or use 100 of 5 mg prednisone

H. Dead Horse...How to kill and properly dispose of animal.

#### IV. THE ESSENTIAL WILDERNESS EQUINE FIRST AID KIT

- **Banamine (Flunixin Meglumine)**, 50 cc solution of 50 mg/ml....Dose for 1000 pound horse is about 10 cc twice a day for control of inflammation of musculoskeletal disorders. For colic start with a lower dose of 5 cc every 6 hours. Use with discretion on horses that are “tied up” and dehydrated. Can go intravenous or in muscle.
- **Rompun (Xylazine)**, 50 cc solution of 100 mg/ml...Dose for 1000 pound horse is about 5 cc. Gives pain control for 30 minutes and sedation. Can go intravenous or in muscle. Need more for mules.
- **Syringes, 6cc and 12 cc syringes (35 cc and 60 cc syringes optional)**
- **Needles 18 gauge**...some 16 gauge if using penicillin or fatal-plus
- **Phenylbutazone 1 gram tablets**...take 25-50 and give by crushing and administering with 60 cc catheter tip syringe. Dose is 2 grams twice a day.
- **60 cc catheter type syringe**
- **Sulfamethoxazole and Trimethoprim Tablets, 800mg/160**...take at least 150 tablets and the dose is 12 every 8 hours for respiratory problems or 15 twice a day for other infections.
- **Atropine ointment**...use two times a day to dilate eye and control pain
- **Chloramphenicol 1% ophthalmic ointment**...use 3-4 times a day for ulcers, infections. (Other antibiotic eye ointments suitable replacement)
- **Fluorescein strips**...stain to see if abrasions or ulcers
- **Dexamethasone ointment**...for use in uveitis without ulcers.
- **Nitrofurazone ointment or Corona**..topical for cuts, wounds
- **Bandage material**...soft gauze, vet wrap, 4x4 gauze, elasticon
- **Thermometer**
- **Stethoscope**
- **Gun...or Fatal Plus**
- **Prednisone 5 mg tablets**...give 100 once a day for several days.
- **Dexamethasone (2 mg/ml of 100 cc)** give 10 to 20 cc IM or orally for first day then 10 cc or 5 cc the next day and 5 cc daily or every other day until hives or itchiness stops.
- **optional: Dormosoden (instead of Rompun...use ½ to 1 cc iv or im)**