

Does your horse have ulcers or is it dentistry or vaccine time again?

We are now holding clinics every Wednesday at the Practice at Dawes Farm, alternating between Gastroscopy Clinics one week and Dentistry and Vaccination Clinics the next. Bringing your horse in to us will mean significantly reduced costs for you, enhanced Covid safety, and more comprehensive facilities available for your horse. Dentistry will be carried out by our in-house experienced dental practitioners Chris Shepherd and Joe Sharps.

As an added bonus we are happy to weigh your horse on our weighbridge free of charge, which is useful for correct weight management and calculation of correct worming doses.

Gastroscopy including sedation: To keep your horse overnight and starve them for you = £310 / To stay just for the day = £270 / Outpatient = £230

Dentistry including sedation and a full dental record to take home = £60

Please don't hesitate to call the clinic for more details or to chat to one of the vets.

Congratulations to our receptionist Helena

Congratulations to Helena on gaining her **Veterinary Practice Administration Certificate**. This really is a great achievement, the time and effort put into earning the certificate really does show. Helena is a huge asset to the Mayes and Scrine team and we could not be more proud of her achievement.

Staff spotlight on Helena:

What is your job description?

"I am one of two receptionists at Mayes and Scrine - so if you've ever called the practice, we've probably had a chat before! I cover all general office duties, including making appointments, answering the office email, putting up drugs, typing prescriptions and making referrals. I also cover the administrative side of our AI packages and export certificates."

What do you find most rewarding about your role?

"Every day is different and the variety is definitely one of the best parts of the job. I love getting to know our clients, particularly when you get to see them and their horse through a long course of treatment or an ongoing issue and they come out the other side happy and healthy."

What do you like to do in your spare time?

"Most of my spare time is taken up by my pony, Travis. He's a 14.2hh, 9 year old Connemara gelding, and I event him at grassroots level."

Do you have any pets?

"Alongside Travis I have two cats: Beatrice and Ziggy. My sister and I keep our horses at the same livery yard and split the yard duties between us, so I also help look after her eventer, Ramona, and her semi-retired mare, Apple, who at 27 (and a total diva) is the boss of us all."

What is the one thing you can't live without?

In the office? Google maps! I would be lost (literally) without it. Outside of work I am an obsessive list maker - I have to have at least five on the go to keep track of my life.

What is one thing on your bucket list?

To compete at Badminton grassroots. Riding cross country in front of Badminton house would be a dream come true.



Meet our vets

We are a six vet horse practice, with 24 emergency cover, on the Surrey/West Sussex border in the south east of England.



Ben Mayes
MA VetMB MRCVS
Clinical Director



Judy Scrine
MA VetMB MRCVS
Clinical Director



Chris Shepherd
BVM&S, BSc (Hons), MSc, MRCVS
Veterinary Surgeon



Mary Kate Burke
MVB MRCVS
Veterinary Surgeon



Debbie Jackson
BVet Med MRCVS
Veterinary Surgeon



Catherine Adern
MRCVS
Veterinary Surgeon

Please visit the 'Our team' page for an update on the whole team at Mayes and Scrine:
mayesandscrine.co.uk/staff.html

Marathon madness continues

Just in case anyone was in doubt as to Judy's madness, and in spite of lockdown meaning live events have only recently restarted, Judy is ploughing on with her plan for 21 in 21. That's 21 marathons in 2021, a total of 550.2 miles (not including training miles obviously). 10 done so far as we near the end of May, so nearly half way now. Covid, injuries and other Acts of God allowing, London Marathon in October will be the first mass participation street marathon and then possibly an actual trip on a plane to Barcelona in November. Both of these concepts are going to seem very strange! As always, Judy is running for Breast Cancer Now. Donations to this incredible charity always very welcome: justgiving.com/judy-scrine2021



FEI ban trimming the whiskers of competition horses

From July this year, horses who have had their sensory hairs removed (unless for veterinary reasons) will be disqualified from FEI competitions, with other governing bodies following suit.

Why are whiskers important?

A horse's whiskers (also known as tactile vibrissae) are sensory hairs that provide valuable information to the horse. They have their own nerve and blood supply. The long and thick hairs are tactical receptors, which act as a 'third eye', and help them gain a sense of their surroundings. The whiskers enable the horse to sense the environment in their blind spot and identify objects. Therefore, whiskers ought to be left as nature intended!



Biosecurity – keeping your horse safe when out and about

Everyone will no doubt be aware of the increasing number of equine infectious disease outbreaks in the UK and Europe.

Every horse is vulnerable to equine diseases, whether they are a competition horse, a happy hacker, or a field companion. With the growing number of horses being moved around the country and Europe, disease is a serious risk.

Biosecurity measures can be taken to significantly reduce the risk of spread of infectious agents and are defined as a set of measures designed to break the cycle and reduce the spread of disease.

As the competition season is now in full swing, it is vital to practice good biosecurity at home and when you are about with your horse. Every horse owner has a responsibility to protect the health and wellbeing of their own horse and others at the event.

Competitions and events bring together a large number of horses in one place and therefore the spread of infectious diseases can be a risk to the equine community.

Here are some things you can do to help stop contagious equine diseases spreading at equine shows/events:

- Take all your own equipment
- Avoid using communal troughs
- Prevent contact with other horses
- Tie your horse to your own transport
- Don't allow your horse to graze around communal areas
- Clean and disinfect your boots and clothing after the show
- Disinfect everything after the event, including your horse transport
- Monitor your horse after the event for signs of ill health
- Ensure your horse's influenza vaccine status is up to date

If your horse is showing any signs of illness before a competition, stay at home!



Weight watching tips for the summer

Grass is the most natural feed for horses, but during the seasons when the grass is continuously growing, grass can be very high in calories. Horses can gain weight very quickly which increases their risk of obesity and related diseases such as laminitis.

Every horse is different and so it is great that there are many ways to restrict a horse's grass intake.

Strip grazing

Strip grazing involves fencing off a section in your horse's field and then moving the fence regularly to allow your horse access to fresh grass. The easiest way to do this is with electric fencing.



Grazing muzzle

When used responsibly, a grazing muzzle can help to restrict your horse's grass intake. A muzzle should ideally not be worn for a full 24 hours, please ensure it is fitted properly and is comfortable for your horse to wear.

Track system

A track system is usually a track built around the outside of a field to encourage horses to move around more. Hay and water should be spread around the track to further encourage movement.

Forage

If you are feeding hay or haylage, ensure you are feeding the correct quantity for your horse's size, amount of exercise and body condition.

Shared grazing

Rotate paddocks according to different dietary needs. Horses with lower body condition scores can crop the grass before the horses with a higher body condition score have their time in the field.

Hard feed

If you are giving your horse a hard feed consider changing it to a balancer which supplies the daily vitamins and minerals your horse needs, but with fewer calories. Always discuss with your vet before changing your horse's diet.

Exercise

We all know that exercise burns calories so if you can ride your horse then do. If you are unable to ride, why not try some non-ridden exercises, such as long-reining.



Whichever method of restricted grazing you choose, always ensure your horse's quality of life is at the forefront of your plan. Speak to your vet to help you put the correct management plan together.

Is it possible for horses to get hay fever?

Hay fever (pollen allergy) is very common in people and some horses are prone to similar allergy symptoms, such as recurrent airway obstruction (RAO), which is associated with dust and mould. Current theories suggest that RAO is a result of the lung's hypersensitivity to inhaled antigens causing both allergic and inflammatory responses.

Some horses show signs of an allergy when out at grass, such as 'summer pasture associated obstructive pulmonary disease' (SPAOPD). SPAOPD causes the airways to narrow and become blocked by excessive mucus.

Signs of RAO and SPAOPD:

- Laboured breathing
- Coughing/wheezing
- Reluctance to exercise
- Weight loss



SPAOPD is worse over the summer months, whereas RAO can be worse in winter, during the damper months and when affected horses are stabled more often.

RAO and SPAOPD can both usually be diagnosed by your vet from the signs alone.

Both conditions can be controlled with management and medication, which your vet can advise.

How to keep your horse cool in hot weather

Turnout times: turn your horses out during the cooler times of the day. Early in the morning and overnight are the best times.

Shade: if you have no access to a stable, make sure your horse has plenty of shade from trees or a purpose built shelter.

Fresh cool water: make sure your horse has access to clean, fresh and cool water.

Salt Lick: providing a salt lick will encourage the horse to drink more. Giving electrolytes to horses by adding them in their water will help with their hydration. Electrolytes are lost when a horse sweats. If adding electrolytes to water always offer fresh clean water as well as electrolyte water.

Exercise: horses should be kept as cool as possible before, during and after ridden work. Riding should be done during cooler times, so early in the morning or late in the evening. Make sure you cool down your horse afterwards by hosing them down, or using a sponge with cold water.

Sunburn: to prevent sunburn use a mask or a fly rug. You can also use sun cream on the pink coloured skin of a horse, but please patch test any new product first.

Signs of heat stroke:

- Weakness
- Increased temperature
- High respiratory and heart rate
- Lethargy
- Dehydration
- Dry mucous membranes in the mouth

If you are worried at all, please call contact us on 01306 628222.





Caring for the field kept horse

Summer is here and for most horse owners that means more turnout for their horses.

Most owners will agree that keeping a horse out at grass is more natural than being stabled. Horses are designed to be constantly moving and eating and being out to grass helps them emotionally as they can interact with other horses, as nature intended.

Generally, all horses and ponies like to live out on grass 24/7. It can help with their physical and mental health and has been found to reduce the risk of behavioural problems which are often associated with stabled horses.

Horses at grass should be checked at least once a day (ideally twice a day minimum) and particular attention should be paid to their demeanour, condition, gait, feet, body and appetite. This will help to detect the early signs of illness/injury. Please always check from both sides!

Here are some important points to consider:

Pasture

“The area of pasture required per horse will depend on the type of grass, ground conditions, time of year, type of horse and degree of pasture management employed. As a general rule, each horse requires about 0.5 - 1 hectares (or 1.25 - 2.5 acres) of grazing of a suitable quality if no extra feeding is being provided.”
nidirect.gov.uk/articles/horses-need-suitable-environment

There are a number of plants and trees that are poisonous to horses and you should regularly check your horse's grazing for signs of these:

Acorns, sycamore seeds and seedlings, ragwort, bracken, yew, rhododendron, buttercups, deadly nightshade, privet, foxglove and ivy.

Also check for overhanging (reachable) trees, such as oak, sycamore, privet etc.

Ragwort is one of the most common causes of poisoning to horses in the UK. Horses don't usually eat it, however if they only have sparse, dried-up grass in their paddock during the summer they are more likely to turn to browsing and eating weeds.

You must also be aware that ragwort becomes palatable when dried, so it is essential to remove from any grassland which will be used for making forage.

It is really important to regularly check your horse's paddock. Removing these plants will prevent your horse from ingesting them.

If you suspect your horse has eaten something poisonous, please call your vet immediately- don't take any risks!

Caring for the field kept horse

Water

Did you know horses can drink between 22 to 68 litres of water a day, depending on the weather? It is therefore vital that your horse always has access to fresh, clean water.

If you suspect your horse is not drinking enough, try offering a secondary supply of water from a different source, such as collected rain water.

If horses do not drink enough they may become dehydrated. Signs of dehydration to look out for are tacky, dry gums, decreased skin elasticity, darker urine, and a depressed appearance.

Fencing

Regularly check the fencing in your horse's paddock to ensure it is in working order and safe, to avoid any injuries. Post and rail fencing is not only aesthetically pleasing but also easy to manage and maintain. Electric fencing can also be beneficial if you need to regularly move the fence line to restrict grazing and is a great way to deter the horses from leaning over the fence. Avoid using barbed wire as the spikes could cause lacerations and are less visible than post and rail fencing.

Shelter

With the ever-changing seasons, it is essential to provide shelter to grass kept horses, to protect them from heat, cold and flies. Shelter can be in natural form - such as trees/hedges, or man-made - such as a purpose-built shelter. When choosing the location for a field shelter, ensure you place it in a well-drained area and facing away from prevailing winds and rain. The shelter should also be large enough for the number of horses in the field.



Check-over

Horses who live out should regularly be groomed to check for cuts and grazes, parasites and rug rubs. This will also help to detect skin problems, such as ringworm, rain-scald or sweet itch.

Rugs

Your horse's overall body condition should be your first reference point when deciding whether to put a rug on, and which to use.

Unless your horse is thin skinned, lacking body weight, elderly or has been fully clipped, they shouldn't need more than a lightweight rug, unless it's extremely cold.

It's important to remember that horses are extremely good at regulating their own temperature. Generally, horses do much better slightly cooler than too warm and it is much easier for a horse to warm up than to try and cool down.

A good quality and well-fitted rug, that is waterproof and wind-proof, will be most efficient, rather than worrying about tog value.



Hooves

Get to know your horse's feet - examine them every day to check for any heat, thrush, cracks, or infections. It is important to pick out your horse's feet every day to remove stones and dirt. During dry weather, applying a hoof moisturising oil a few times a week may help to prevent cracks.

Your farrier should visit every 4-6 weeks if your horse is shod, and every 6-10 weeks for an unshod horse

Ask your vet about appropriate nutritional changes or supplements that may help if your horse's hoof quality or growth rate needs to improve.

Caring for the field kept horse

Feeding

The first and main ingredient in any horse's diet should be forage! Most horse owners will answer very precisely how much hard feed they give, but very few owners know how much hay their horse receives let alone the exact amount they consume. This knowledge is the key to balancing their diet and reaching the ideal body condition score.

The horse's stomach secretes gastric acid continuously and their digestive health depends on getting a continuous supply of fibrous food to soak it up.

Warm weather is a potential colic risk not only because it can cause horses to lose their appetite, but also because it may affect the quality of the pasture available for grazing – there may not be enough grass for them to eat. It's important to make sure there is enough grass available, and if not to top this up with hay, and keep an eye out for any signs that your horse is losing interest in food.

As autumn/winter arrives, grass growth will slow and its quality can decrease and so it is important to add fibre to your horse's diet to maintain a healthy digestive system. Hay is the most common way of providing your horse with fibre and nutritional needs.

Make sure you increase hay and any hard feed slowly to maintain a healthy digestive system.

Worming

Excessive worming within the horse population has led to a growing resistance problem. This has manifested with some wormers only having a 10% efficacy in most horses in the UK. It is therefore essential that the problem is tackled and the first step is to start intelligent targeted worming by collecting faeces for a worm egg count. Whether to treat or not can then be discussed with your veterinary surgeon, hopefully leading to a reduction in the risk of resistance and damage to the environment. By following an intelligent, targeted worming programme most owners can dramatically reduce their wormer use throughout the year.

So, if you are thinking of worming your horse then stop, collect a ball of faeces and have it assessed. Hopefully your horse will be one of the 80-90% of horses that don't need worming regularly.

Poo picking your horse's paddock at least twice weekly and preferably every day will help to reduce worm burden on the pasture.

Laminitis

All horses, ponies and donkeys are at risk from laminitis throughout the year. Do be aware of the threat of laminitis and, if appropriate, restrict your horse's grazing and reduce or remove any food with a high sugar content accordingly. An increase in body condition, a larger than usual crest or the development of 'digital pulses' in the fetlock region are all early warning signs that, if noticed, may help prevent the onset of the disease. If your horse or pony is sore on hard ground (eg "footsore" after a foot trim) this could also be a sign of low-grade laminitis. Prompt attention from your vet is essential if you are worried your horse has laminitis and it should be treated as an emergency.



Caring for the field kept horse

Fly control

Flies and other biting insects can be a real nuisance, leading to irritable horses and putting them at risk of injury. Here are some practical steps you can take to reduce their impact on your horse:

Manure: Flies are attracted to manure to breed, so poo-pick your field regularly.

Fly rugs: Investing in a fly rug can help prevent flies from attacking your horse in the field.

Fly masks: Are a great way of keeping flies away from your horse's eyes and out of their ears.

Insect repellent: Fly repellent will only be effective for a certain amount of time so make sure you top-up regularly. Always do a patch test first to make sure they won't irritate the skin.



Dentistry

Dental care is extremely important to the health and welfare of our horses. Prevention is always better than cure and as such we encourage our clients to have their horse's mouths examined on a regular basis. A thorough examination is key to maintaining dental health and it is recommended that this is performed every 6 to 12 months, as advised by your vet.



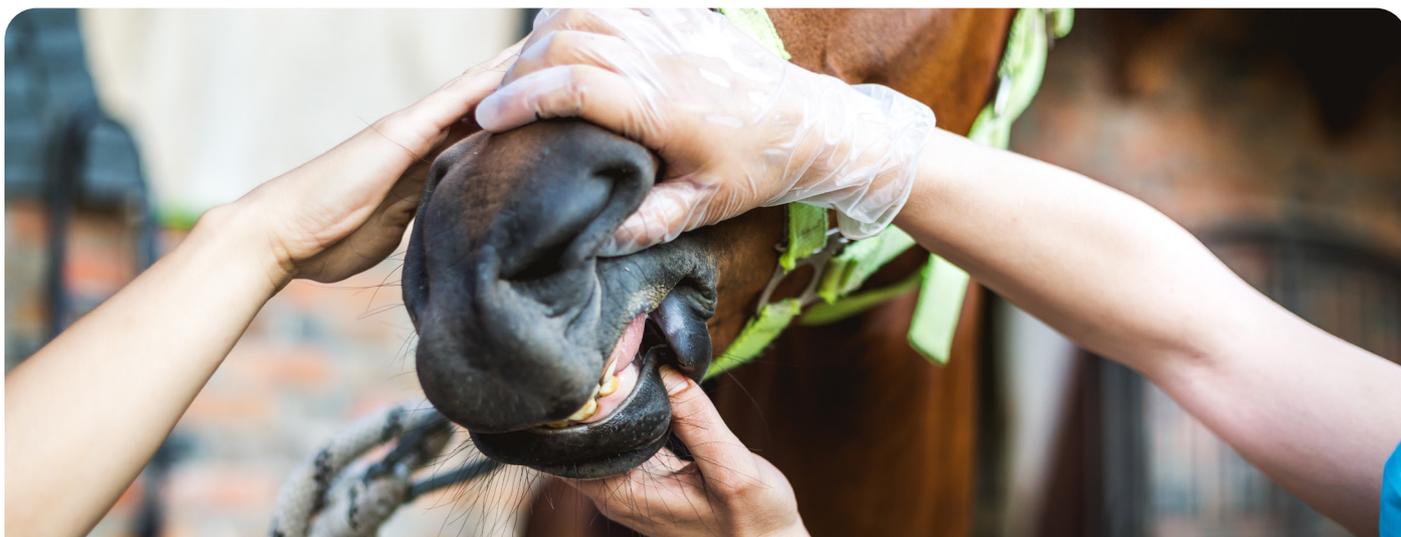
Flu and tetanus

All horses, ponies and donkeys should be vaccinated against equine influenza and tetanus.

Equine Influenza virus is one of the most contagious diseases that affects horses and can be devastating in susceptible populations. Multiple small outbreaks occur every year in the UK, and major outbreaks have occurred before and may well occur again.

Vaccination is vital in protecting individual horses and preventing the spread of disease.

Tetanus is frequently a fatal condition in horses. If your horse has not been vaccinated (or their vaccination programme has lapsed) and it sustains a wound it is essential that a tetanus anti-toxin injection is given as soon as possible to prevent tetanus infection. This is not the same as a vaccination but will protect your horse against tetanus for approximately 3 weeks. It is a very dangerous policy to leave your horse unvaccinated as many tetanus cases occur without any known wound having been found.



Your horse's vital signs

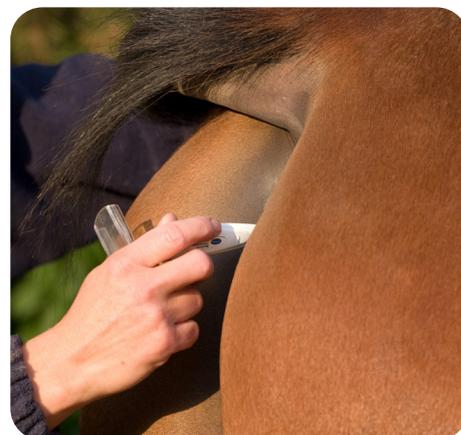
Knowing how to take your horse's vital signs, and understanding what's normal for him, can help you to monitor their health and give you an important early warning that something might be wrong. The principal vital signs for horses are temperature, heart rate, respiratory rate and mucus membrane colour.

Always call your vet immediately if any vital signs are not as expected.

Temperature:

A horse's temperature should be between 37.2-38.3°C (99-101°F). To take your horse's temperature, tie them up in a quiet, safe environment and gently insert the thermometer into the rectum, having first dipped it into a small amount of lubricant such as Vaseline. Hold it in place for one minute or until the thermometer beeps. When you have taken the reading, gently clean it with some wet cotton wool.

It's easiest to use a modern digital thermometer. Choose one that's designed for livestock and horses as it will be thicker at the holding end to help you keep a firm grip and it should have a large digital display, making it quick and easy to read.



Heart rate:

A healthy horse's normal heart rate at rest can be between 24-40 beats per minute depending on age, fitness levels and health conditions.

You can take your horse's pulse rate by feeling for the artery on the inside of the jawbone (near where the throat latch of a bridle goes). The artery you're feeling for will be spongy and you should be able to feel the pulse when you place your middle and index finger over it.

Your horse's heart rate can also be taken with a stethoscope, which should be placed on the left side, just behind the elbow in the girth area.



Your horse's vital signs

Respiratory Rate:

The respiratory rate for a healthy horse at rest can be between 8-16 breaths per minute, but may vary depending on age, fitness levels and health conditions.

Measure the respiratory rate by watching your horse's flank (or side) move in and out - each inhale or exhale is one breath - for one minute. You can also watch your horse's nostrils flare with every breath.

Mucous membranes:

Mucous membranes line the mouth and gums. Normal healthy gums should be pale pink and moist. If you gently press a finger against the gums it should turn paler and then return to normal colour in approximately 2 seconds.

Other tests to check your horse's vital signs:

Gut Sounds:

You can listen to your horse's gut sounds with a stethoscope and you should do this on both sides, high and low. Listen for sounds of gurgling, gas like growls and tinkling fluid sounds. Prolonged silence may indicate abnormalities.

Eyes & Nostrils:

A healthy horse's eyes are clean and bright with eyelashes protruding outwards (not pointing downwards) and free from discharge. Any deviation from this could indicate pain. A healthy horse's nostrils are usually free of discharge, but a clear discharge can be normal. Alert your vet if you notice large amounts of green, yellow, or white discharge - as this could indicate a respiratory issue or an infection brewing.

The pinch test:

The pinch test is used to test for hydration. Gently pinch together a piece of skin near the point of shoulder so it becomes raised like a tent. In a hydrated horse, the skin should snap back to normal in one or two seconds, any longer or if the skin holds the 'pinch' it indicates that the horse may be dehydrated.

It is also important to feel your horse's legs regularly for any heat or swelling, which could be signs of injury in the tendons or ligaments.

Is your horse overweight or underweight?

Prior to adjusting your horse's diet, it is essential to have an objective idea of the horse's body condition score (between 0-5 scale, 2.5 being ideal condition).

This objective score relies on the amount of fat deposits on the neck, withers, shoulder, ribs, loin and tailhead.

Coming into winter, a body condition score of 3 can be acceptable as horses will often lose weight through the winter due to lower quality grazing and the ambient temperature.

For more information please visit: bluecross.org.uk/pet-advice/how-body-score-your-horse

If your horse's vital signs are out of any of these parameters and they are showing other signs of being unwell or out of sorts, it may be time to contact your vet.