



# Delmarva Equine Clinic Newsletter

Volume 2, Issue 1

www.delmarva-equine.com

Winter 2011



Dr. Michelle Egli shockwaving a horse.

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

**1** Shockwave

**2** Blanketing

Interested in acupuncture?  
Give us a call to find out more  
information!

## Shockwave

-Meryl Kern, DVM

We are pleased to announce that we now offer shockwave treatment! Extracorporeal Shock Wave Technology (ESWT), better known as shockwave, is a non-invasive treatment for many injuries. It can help an animal return to work faster and helps to prevent recurrent injuries. It has been shown to relieve pain, speed healing, and improve the quality of healing.

The word "shockwave" is actually a physics term to describe a rapid increase in pressure. Before you get the imagery of some gruesome horror movie in your head, it does **not** involve an electric shock! The pressure wave created is actually a sound wave. It is high-energy and focused, allowing us to zone in right to the area that needs treatment. The pressure wave creates a biologic response in treated tissue.

Shock waves have been shown to increase blood supply to the treated area, initiate formation of new blood vessels, decrease inflammation, decrease pain, stimulate bone and tendon healing, improve fiber alignment in tendon repair, stimulate growth factors, and hasten healing time.

*continued on page 2*

Shockwave treatment was first used 20 years ago to break up kidney stones in people. Nowadays, it has uses in treating people for conditions such as heel pain, tennis elbow, plantar fasciitis, lateral epicondylitis, calcifying tendonitis, achilles tendonopathies, delayed fracture healing, and OCD's.

Shockwave can be used to treat the following conditions in horses:

- OCD's
- Subchondral bone cysts
- Suspensory ligament desmitis
- Bucked shins
- Stress fractures
- Splints
- Fetlock problems
- Green osselets
- Navicular syndrome
- Collateral ligament desmitis
- Tendonitis
- Tendon avulsions
- DJD (Degenerative Joint Disease)
- Arthritis
- Muscle strains
- Dorsal spinous process impingements
- Sacroiliac disease
- Wounds (helps to heal as well as has antibacterial properties)
- Back soreness
- Foot pain
- Other musculoskeletal disorders creating chronic pain and lameness

An important point to note is that there are several different shockwave machines on the market. Some of those machines do not produce a true shockwave despite having the misnomer of a "shockwave machine." They do not have research to back any results like the focused ESWT does.

A typical treatment plan involves administering a series of pulses ("shocks") to the affected area once every three weeks or so (somewhere between one and four weeks depending on what we are treating). Clipping the hair from the area (unless the hair is short), sedation, and a twitch may be necessary. The machine does generate a somewhat loud sound and may cause some discomfort. However, many horses will tolerate the treatment with just some cotton in the ears to muffle the sounds and a twitch.

Because a short period of analgesia, approximately three days, may occur, this treatment should not be done immediately prior to racing or competition. If the horse doesn't realize something hurts, he may not protect his leg and thus can suffer a catastrophic injury. Rest is not needed after treatment, but a horse may feel so good for a few days that he should be confined or controlled for the first several days post-treatment if an injury such as a tendon tear will be worsened by high activity. Long term results from treatment may be seen in one to three treatments.

## Blanketing

Pam Fulcher

Now that winter is here, most horse owners have decided "to blanket or not to blanket". Most horses if allowed to properly grow their winter coat do not require a blanket. If you decided to blanket it will become another part of your daily care routine and they should not just be placed on and ignored!

It is best to put on only what the horse requires. **DO NOT OVER BLANKET!** It is unhealthy to place too many layers on the horse as they can become over heated and eventually sweat. Once this occurs it will then cause your horse to "catch a chill" and also create a favorable environment for fungus to grow.

Occasionally if the weather becomes extreme you may need to add another blanket. Make sure the most weather resistant one is your outer most "layer". You don't want an outer shell that can not withstand the elements as it will become too wet and heavy which will eventually "chill" your horse. Once the extreme weather has passed remove any extra blankets not needed. This is always a good time to launder your blankets, especially those that are directly against you horse. When you launder sheets and blankets you can place 1 cup of chlorohexadine solution in with them as a disinfectant and use cold water. The cleaner you're "under" blankets are the less likely your horse will develop a skin fungus. You should also periodically remove all blankets to allow the skin and hair to breathe awhile.

When using blankets with leg straps, for safety reasons make sure you "cross" them. The proper way to cross the straps is **NOT DIAGONALLY!** It is to loop them through each other and snap them back to the same side. This will prevent your horse from becoming tangled in the straps and not place stress on the straps as well as help keep the blankets in place better.

So to sum it up, don't over blanket, check them daily, periodically remove blankets and check for fungus. This will help your horse make it through winter safe, not too mention save you some expenses! **THINK SPRING!**



Owned by  
Amanda Halley