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March 2017 Newsletter

There's Something About a Pretty Face

A halter is the number one accessory a horse owner purchases. Oftentimes, a halter even comes with a horse when it is purchased from the previous owner. We all love them. Not only are they necessary to handle your horse for safety reasons, they come in such a variety of colors and styles that they become a fashion accessory as well. However, halters can become problems in certain situations.

One of the most common injuries we see with halters are when halters are left on, and somehow the halter gets stuck in an uncomfortable position and rubs the horse. This is especially true when a horse is difficult to catch, therefore an owner leaves the halter on to facilitate catching. However, if that halter ever becomes stuck, it can cause some serious issues. If a halter must be left on a horse, owners should consider purchasing a breakaway halter. Breakaway halters are nylon halters that have a leather crownpiece. While the nylon won't break if the horse gets into a bind, the leather will. That way, if the horse ever becomes entangled, or the halter needs to come off, the horse can break the leather if he pulls hard enough.

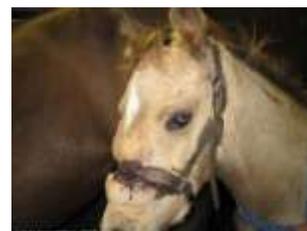


Another common injury from halters is facial nerve paralysis. The facial nerve runs just under the facial crest (where you see the big cheek muscle), then runs just under the skin until it splits just around the lips. The facial nerve allows movement of the lips. Unfortunately, the metal loops on a nylon halter sit right on top of the facial nerve. Too much pressure by the halter to the facial nerve can actually kill the nerve. This causes a usually one-sided "droopy" face. The nose seems to "twist" towards the normal side. It can also make the affected side look a little puffy since there is no nerve to tell the lips to pull in.



A less common injury with nylon or rope halters is the broken neck. A horse's natural instinct when it gets stuck is to struggle hard enough to get away. The problem is, horses are strong enough that they can break their own bones. Or at the very least, tear muscles and ligaments. A broken neck can be a catastrophic problem that requires euthanasia, if the act of breaking the neck doesn't kill them in the first place.

A common mistake that horse owners make is to leave a halter on a growing foal. Unless the halter is inspected on a daily basis, this must NOT be done. A growing foal will quickly outgrow his halter, and if the halter is left in place, not only is it painful, but it can cause permanent disfiguration as the bones and other structures grow around the halter. As with the adult horses, any



halter that must be left on a foal should absolutely be a breakaway halter in the case that the halter gets caught on something.

The bottom line is, if at all possible halters should only be on a horse when being handled. If a halter MUST be left on a horse, it should be a breakaway halter in case the horse gets caught on something. Foals should NOT wear halters for long periods of time at all because of the risk of the halter becoming too small and growing over the halter. As always, if you have questions or concerns about your halter, feel free to call your veterinarian.

Castration Signs: March 17th thru 24th

Are You Ready!!!

Pre Foal Vaccines for Preg Mares /Foal Kits

Coggins up to date for spring travel

Teeth and Yearly Vaccinations

Worming and Fecal