

Dear Nicole,

Chiropractic therapy is an important adjunct to traditional medicine and essential for maintaining the athletic potential of your equine sports companion and your horse's general health. Tacoma Equine Hospital is proud to offer chiropractic care. Dr. Tricia Arnold is an IVCA-certified Animal Chiropractor and an equine veterinarian with over 16 years of experience. Please enjoy this informative newsletter and call our office at 253-535-6999 if you have any questions or would like to schedule an appointment for this beneficial therapy.

EQUINE CHIROPRACTIC CARE

Why should you even consider equine chiropractic care?

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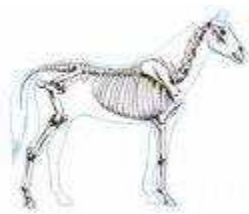
It is important to remember how sore YOU have to be before you limp. As people we have many aches and pains that certainly don't show themselves as a limp. As horse owners and equine veterinarians we assess and treat lameness depending on both subtle and severe limping. Minor aches and pains are generally not treated until there is a grade of lameness that we can see. A stiffness or soreness potentially affecting athletic performance or quality of life may not present itself in a way that can be diagnosed by the trained veterinary eye.

What is animal chiropractic?

It is a manual, hands on therapy focused on maintaining and restoring the health of the nervous and musculoskeletal systems. Animal chiropractic is supplementary to traditional veterinary medicine.

The Spinal Cord

The spinal vertebrae encase the spinal cord, which branches off to nerves that transfer information between the brain, spinal cord, organs, muscles and other parts of the body. The brain and spinal cord control all organ and tissue function. The transmission of information to and from the brain and spinal cord must flow freely to allow proper function.



What is a vertebral subluxation complex (VSC)?

The simplest way to think of a VSC is "stuckage." Two vertebrae in the spine are not moving as well as they should be in relation to each other, hence they are stuck. With a VSC the horse loses normal flexibility in that portion of his spine. He must compensate for this lack of movement by overflexing a different part of his spine. This causes him to use more energy and engage different muscles than he would if his muscles were working properly. Over time, if the vertebrae remain stuck, this will negatively affect

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the horse's performance and lead to more VSC's and subsequent compensations.

What are the signs of VSC?

- Decreased performance
- Subtle personality change
- Tail swishing
- Difficulty flexing poll
- Difficulty flexing long and low
- Bucking

The signs the horse shows depend on location of pain, intensity of pain, and their personality.

Common causes of Vertebral Subluxation complexes

Every day most horses are exposed to situations which can cause damage to their spine.

The following examples could cause VSCs (subluxations):



● **Trauma:**
Caused by falls, trips, slips or being cast in the stable.



● **Performance:**
Every event strains the spine in a different, specific way.



● **Narcotics:**
The entire general anaesthetic process can cause back problems.



● **Rider:**
Problems with the rider's seat (e.g. a crooked seat) can lead to back problems in the horse.



● **Transportation:**
Long transportation times, accidents, poor shock absorption in the trailer and unsympathetic driving can cause damage.



● **Shoes:**
Poor hoof care and incorrect shoeing interfere with the horse's movement resulting in subluxations of the spine.



● **Birthing difficulties:**
Difficult births where the foal is forcibly extracted can cause problems in both the mare and the foal.



● **Saddle:**
Poorly fitting saddles are one of the most frequent causes of back problems.



● **Lack of movement:**
Lack of space in which to move does not give the horse enough opportunity to ease tension by bucking or rolling.



● **Age:**
As age increases the effects of previous small and/or large traumas to the spine become more apparent.

How can a VSC be corrected?

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An animal chiropractor identifies a VSC during an examination and aims to restore mobility to the vertebral joints. Put simply, the chiropractor makes "stuck" joints "unstuck". Correction, also known as an adjustment, is made via a quick, short thrust along the plane of the joint.

Is Animal Chiropractic safe for my horse?

Veterinarians and chiropractors certified by the IVCA (International Veterinary Chiropractic Association) or the AVCA (American Veterinary Chiropractic Association) have gone through extensive training courses where safety of the horse is of primary concern. They are taught to adjust using primarily "short-lever" techniques in which the hands are placed directly on the affected vertebrae and the adjustment is aimed in a very specific plane for that joint. IVCA and AVCA certified doctors are not taught to adjust using long lever techniques or with any other tools than their hands.

What can I expect from a chiropractic appointment?

The chiropractic examination will start with a discussion of your horse's medical history, your concerns about his current performance, and your expectations for him. The horse will be evaluated for symmetry, heat, swelling, pain, and muscle atrophy. They will then be motion-palpated to identify VSC's, which will be treated with chiropractic adjustment.

All horses respond differently to chiropractic treatment. Many will show improvements almost immediately, while others will take 24-48 hours before they achieve full benefit from the adjustment.

Please contact our office anytime if you have questions, comments or would like to schedule an appointment. Contact us at 253-535-6999 or e-mail us at info@tacomaequine.com.

Visit our website www.tacomaequine.com for more information about our staff, hospital and the services we offer.