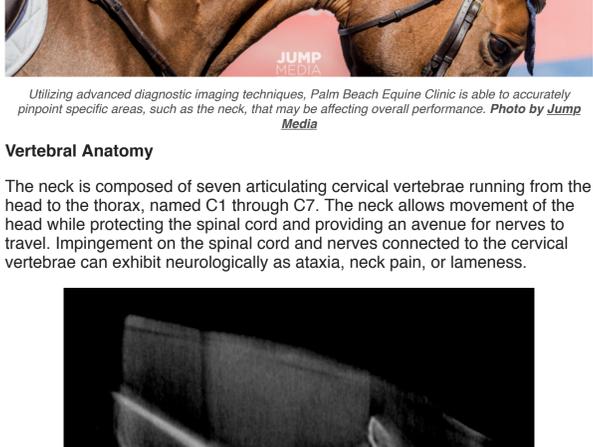


## A Link Between Neck Issues and Lameness

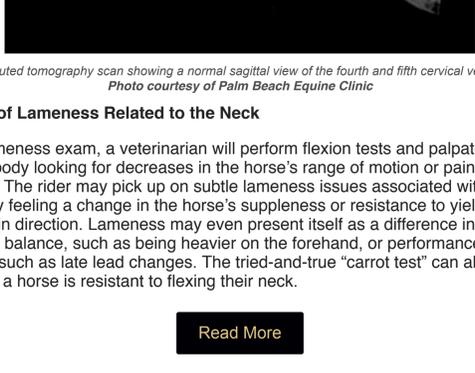
Typically, when a horse's gait feels off or may be lacking usual impulsion, the rider often assumes it to be an issue of lameness associated with the forelimbs or hindlimbs. However, that may not always be the case. Utilizing advanced diagnostic imaging techniques, Palm Beach Equine Clinic is able to accurately pinpoint the specific area that is affecting overall performance. In many cases, the cervical vertebrae are often identified as the cause of lameness, asymmetry, and poor performance.



Utilizing advanced diagnostic imaging techniques, Palm Beach Equine Clinic is able to accurately pinpoint specific areas, such as the neck, that may be affecting overall performance. Photo by Jump Media

### Vertebral Anatomy

The neck is composed of seven articulating cervical vertebrae running from the head to the thorax, named C1 through C7. The neck allows movement of the head while protecting the spinal cord and providing an avenue for nerves to travel. Impingement on the spinal cord and nerves connected to the cervical vertebrae can exhibit neurologically as ataxia, neck pain, or lameness.



A computed tomography scan showing a normal sagittal view of the fourth and fifth cervical vertebrae. Photo courtesy of Palm Beach Equine Clinic

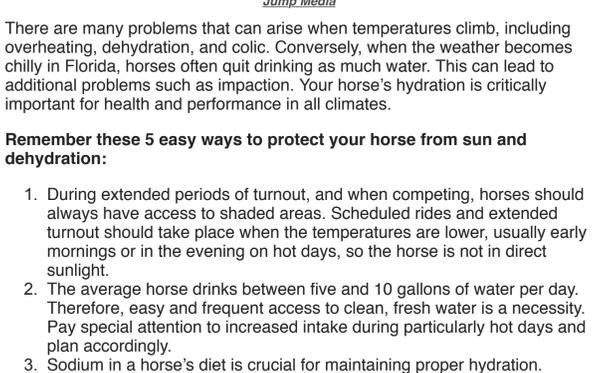
### Signs of Lameness Related to the Neck

In a lameness exam, a veterinarian will perform flexion tests and palpate areas of the body looking for decreases in the horse's range of motion or pain upon flexion. The rider may pick up on subtle lameness issues associated with the neck by feeling a change in the horse's suppleness or resistance to yielding in a certain direction. Lameness may even present itself as a difference in the horse's balance, such as being heavier on the forehand, or performance issues such as late lead changes. The tried-and-true "carrot test" can also show if a horse is resistant to flexing their neck.

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## Horse Health Reminder: Hydration

Even in the winter months, it is important not to underestimate the heat, humidity, and sun. Palm Beach Equine Clinic stresses the importance of proper hydration and sun protection year-round, especially to Florida-based equestrians and winter season snowbirds.



Your horse's hydration is critically important for health and performance in all climates. Photo by Jump Media

There are many problems that can arise when temperatures climb, including overheating, dehydration, and colic. Conversely, when the weather becomes chilly in Florida, horses often quit drinking as much water. This can lead to additional problems such as impaction. Your horse's hydration is critically important for health and performance in all climates.

### Remember these 5 easy ways to protect your horse from sun and dehydration:

1. During extended periods of turnout, and when competing, horses should always have access to shaded areas. Scheduled rides and extended turnout should take place when the temperatures are lower, usually early mornings or in the evening on hot days, so the horse is not in direct sunlight.
2. The average horse drinks between five and 10 gallons of water per day. Therefore, easy and frequent access to clean, fresh water is a necessity. Pay special attention to increased intake during particularly hot days and plan accordingly.
3. Sodium in a horse's diet is crucial for maintaining proper hydration. Providing a salt block or supplementing with properly measured electrolytes in a horse's feed or water can help ensure that sodium requirements are being met and that your horse is drinking a sufficient amount of water.
4. Especially in the extreme summer heat, horse owners should pay attention to the amount of sweat their horse is producing. Anhidrosis, or the inability to sweat normally, can be a common challenge, particularly in hot, humid climates. In addition to lack of sweat, signs of anhidrosis can include increased respiratory rate, elevated temperature, areas of hair loss, or dry and flaky skin. If you notice any of these signs, contact Palm Beach Equine Clinic immediately.
5. Clean water buckets often and always fill with fresh water before leaving the barn. Veterinarians often recommend placing one bucket of freshwater and one bucket of electrolytes. Usually a horse will balance his electrolytes with the opportunity to drink from one or more of these buckets.

These are just a few of the important issues to be aware of during the temperature change in Florida. Contact [Palm Beach Equine Clinic](#) to learn more about precautions that can be taken to keep horses happy and healthy throughout the winter competition season.

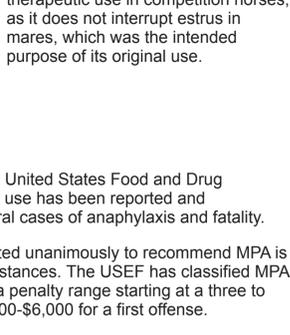
## 5 Questions for Dr. Jordan Lewis

Dr. Jordan Lewis is a graduate of the University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine and has dedicated her professional career to serving her home state. Dr. Lewis grew up with horses and completed an internship in equine medicine and surgery at the Equine Medical Center in Ocala.

### Get to know Dr. Lewis:

#### 1. What is your background with horses?

I moved from New York City to Fort Lauderdale, FL, when I was eight years old. My dad grew up loving horses, and when I was two, he bought a horse. We would visit travel from our home in New York City to visit him in the Pocono Mountains every weekend to ride. My first experience on a horse was riding double with my dad through corn fields. When I was eight years old, we moved to Florida and I was lucky enough to get my own pony. I got totally hooked on horses and I competed on the Arabian circuit as a teenager.



Dr. Jordan Lewis. Photo courtesy of Palm Beach Equine Clinic

#### 2. What inspired you to pursue veterinary medicine?

As a child, I participated in local 4-H programs and had the experience of touring an equine surgical and rehabilitation facility. I realized early that this was exactly what I wanted to do as my career.

#### 3. When did you join Palm Beach Equine Clinic and what is your specialty?

I joined the team at Palm Beach Equine Clinic in June of 2005. I love the fact that we have such a dynamic team of veterinarians to work with and consult on difficult cases. I wouldn't say I have a main focus as I am able to do everything from sports medicine and lameness exams to reproduction work thanks to the clinic's wide range of cases and capabilities.

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## In The News: USEF Board of Directors Prohibit Use of Medroxyprogesterone Acetate



Photo by Jump Media

The United States Equestrian Federation (USEF) Board of Directors voted this fall to prohibit the use of Medroxyprogesterone acetate (MPA), also known as Depo-Provera in humans, in horses competing in USEF-licensed competitions. The rule went into effect December 1, 2019, however, due to the length of time involved for MPA to clear a horse's system, sanctions for a positive test result will begin on June 1, 2020.

A panel convened by the USEF determined that MPA has no therapeutic use in competition horses, as it does not interrupt estrus in mares, which was the intended purpose of its original use.

Additionally, MPA is not approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration for use in equines and its use has been reported and documented to be associated with several cases of anaphylaxis and fatality.

As a result of this analysis, the panel voted unanimously to recommend MPA be added to the list of USEF prohibited substances. The USEF has classified MPA as a Category III substance, which has a penalty range starting at a three to six month suspension and a fine of \$3,000-\$6,000 for a first offense.

Horse owners should consult [Palm Beach Equine Clinic](#) veterinarians at (561) 793-1599 for personalization and to determine options that best suit each individual competition horse.

## No Hoof, No Horse

Watch as Dr. Stephen O'Grady discusses four of the most common hoof problems in horses in this US Equestrian Learning Center video. Get the scoop on Hoof Abscesses, Thrush, Foot Bruising, and Hoof Wall Defects.



Stephen E. O'Grady, DVM, MRCVS  
Common Hoof Problems  
Posted: November 2018  
Length: 12:31

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