



## Neuromuscular Biopsies: Cracking the Code on Muscle Disorders in Horses

Identifying the root of performance issues in equine athletes can be like connecting a puzzle of often-ambiguous signs or a process of elimination through diagnostics. Veterinarians can exhaust all the tools in their medical arsenals trying to figure out why a horse may be losing muscle mass and stamina or refusing to work, but the answer could be hiding in the horse's muscle tissue. Palm Beach Equine Clinic's Internal Medicine Specialist [Peter Heidmann, DVM, DACVIM](#), has a keen interest in connecting these signs and identifying muscle disorders.



Palm Beach Equine Clinic's board-certified internal medicine specialist Dr. Peter Heidmann obtaining a neuromuscular biopsy with a Bergstrom needle. **Photos by Jump Media**

"Correctly diagnosing and treating muscle disorders in horses can be a very rewarding process, because once you develop an effective treatment plan, the horse will usually experience an extraordinary recovery," said Dr. Heidmann. "I've had cases where we sent muscle biopsy samples to a pathologist, enacted a treatment plan, and then sent another sample six months later to check our progress. The results were so impressive that the pathologist called to confirm that it was the same horse!"

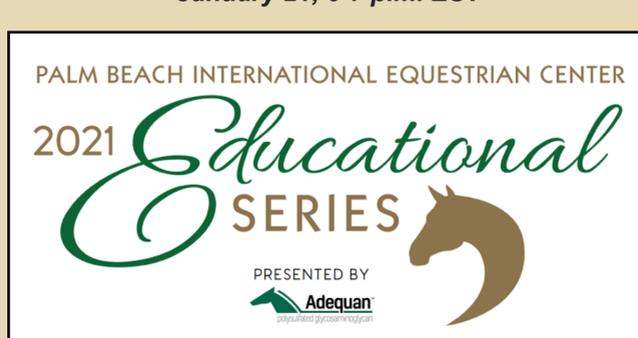
Muscle disorders can present themselves with a range of signs from muscle stiffness and pain to extreme cases of muscle atrophy. Most commonly, presentations occur during training and may include pain, stiffness, tremors, and a reluctance to move. Such symptoms usually lead veterinarians to conduct a full lameness evaluation.

"We usually look at mechanics first, and when there is no lameness determined and no joint, tendon, or ligament issues, we can further narrow down the search to determine if there is nerve impingement leading to muscle atrophy," said Dr. Heidmann. He will often see a horse with such impingement work very well at an extended trot, but lose all power or appear stiff and lame as soon as the gait is collected.

[Understand Your Horse's Neuromuscular Function](#)

## Join Us Virtually to Learn Tips for Maintaining Overall Equine Health and Longevity

January 21, 6-7 p.m. EST



PBEC is proud to sponsor the PBIEC Educational Series, presented by Adequan® during WEF 2. During this virtual educational webinar, Drs. Marilyn Connor, Tyler Davis and Ryan Lukens will cover their respective topics of Sports Medicine and Regenerative Therapies, Dentistry, and Veterinary Medical Manipulation.

Pre-registration is required. Participants will automatically be entered to win a luxury item from Karina Brez Jewelry as the grand prize giveaway.

[Register Here](#)

## Educating Dressage4Kids on Equine Health Basics

Dr. Meredith Mitchell kicked off the 2021 winter season by leading a discussion on horse health with Lendon Gray and the students at [Dressage4Kids](#). She covered topics such as summer sores, anhidrosis, cellulitis, electrolytes, and warning signs that a horse may be colicing.

These are only a few of the many equine health aspects that Florida Equestrians and all horsemen should keep top of mind. Make sure your horse is in optimal health by checking in with your PBEC Equine Veterinarian.



Dr. Meredith Mitchell (right) informs the Dressage4Kids students about various horse health topics during her discussion.

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## Congratulations to Premiere Week Hunter Champion, Stephanie Danhaki



The division championship in the Palm Beach Equine Clinic Amateur-Owner Hunter 18-35, presented by Palm Beach Equine Clinic, went to Stephanie Danhaki of Pacific Palisades, CA, and her own Tufton Avenue. The pair earned a total of 20 points to be named champion.

[See Division Results](#)



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