



Easy Breathing for Dickens

Respiratory health can easily be overlooked. Unlike with a horse's gaits, owners and riders do not typically pay close attention to a horse's breathing for subtle irregularities or inconsistencies. Yet, respiratory function must be at its best for an equine athlete to pump the voluminous amounts of air in and out of its lungs required during exercise. When the horse's respiratory system is not functioning up to par, the horse could have labored breathing, exercise intolerance, and prolonged recovery after exercise.



Radiograph of Dickens used to identify a paranasal cyst. Photo courtesy of Palm Beach Equine Clinic

As rider Madison Aguilar was bringing Dickens – a 14-year-old Quarter Horse – back into a training program, she noticed some performance issues under saddle. She scheduled a performance evaluation with Dr. Meredith Mitchell to assess Dickens before moving forward with training and increasing his workload. As Dr. Mitchell was watching Dickens being ridden, she saw his breathing was exacerbated after only light work. She went up to him, simply held her hands over his nostrils, and noticed that there was no airflow coming out of his right nostril.

After taking digital radiographs (x-rays) of the horse's head, Dr. Mitchell identified a paranasal sinus cyst responsible for Dickens' breathing troubles.

To relieve Dickens, they scheduled surgery to remove the paranasal sinus cyst with board-certified equine surgeon Dr. Weston Davis. Once at the Equine Hospital, Dr. Davis used an endoscope to examine inside the horse's nasal passages. They found two cystic structures in his right maxillary sinus and then proceeded with a standing maxillary flap surgery to remove the cysts.

"I am so thankful to my vet for being the best at her job and to the whole crew at Palm Beach Equine Clinic for making sure this boy was comfortable and recovering well during his time in the hospital."

– Madison Aguilar



Dickens is now home and on the road to recovery with full, unobstructed breathing. Photo courtesy of Palm Beach Equine Clinic

Whenever there is a question involving the health and well-being of your horse, do not hesitate to call your Palm Beach Equine Clinic veterinarian at 561-793-1599.

Read Dickens' Full Story

Meet Dr. Meredith Mitchell

Dr. Mitchell completed her undergraduate degree in Equine Science at Centenary University in Hackettstown, New Jersey, while simultaneously competing on the Intercollegiate Horse Show Association team. She went on to pursue her dream of becoming a veterinarian by graduating from Ross University School of Veterinary Medicine. During her clinical year at Colorado State University, she became acupuncture certified in small animals, large animals, and exotics.

Her main interests in equine veterinary medicine are sports medicine, lameness, rehabilitation, and alternative therapies. Outside of the clinic, Dr. Mitchell enjoys spending time with her family, friends, and her dogs. She also loves going to the beach, scuba diving, hiking, traveling, and practicing yoga.



Dr. Meredith Mitchell became a member of the PBEC team in 2017. Photo by Jump Media

Learn More About Dr. Mitchell

Considerations for the Aging Performance Horse

The Plaid Horse



Palm Beach Equine Clinic Hospital Director Dr. Kathleen Timmins. Photo courtesy of Palm Beach Equine Clinic

From a veterinary perspective, horses can be considered "middle-aged" by 13 years of age, and "seniors" by 20 years of age. Although many sport horses may just be coming into their prime for training and competing during these years, horses show signs of aging at different rates just like humans do. As horses age some physiological functions start to decline, and they require extra care to maintain their overall health and condition.

Advances in diagnostics, therapies, and medications can help to support equine athletes and keep them performing well into their golden years. While many of the same health factors apply to horses of all ages, several additional and significant concerns should be considered for the aging horse.

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Three Weeks, Three Wins for Stephanie Danhaki



Stephanie Danhaki with Baker Street and Bright Side, photographed with PBEC's Dr. Caitlin Hosea (left). Photo by Sportfot

The division championship in the Amateur-Owner Hunter 18-35, presented by Palm Beach Equine Clinic, went for a third time this season to Stephanie Danhaki of Pacific Palisades, CA, and Bright Side. The pair earned a total of 28 points to be named champion. Stephanie also earned the reserve championship with Baker Street.

See Division Results



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