



Spring Flowers Bring Pollen Showers: How To Help Your Horse Cope With Allergies

The Plaid Horse

Got allergies? Well, chances are, your horses do, too.

With warmer temperatures and spring blooms pushing up pollen levels, it seems like everyone at the barn – human and animal – is coughing and congested. If you have ever wondered what you can do to help a horse suffering from allergies, Palm Beach Equine Clinic veterinarian [Dr. David Priest](#) shares his knowledge on addressing allergies and helping horses breathe easy. In his daily veterinary work, Dr. Priest primarily focuses on equine respiratory health. He is experienced in treating conditions ranging from concerning coughs to obstructive or mechanical issues affecting airway function, such as recurrent laryngeal neuropathy (commonly known as “roaring”).



A PBEC patient with a swollen, tearing eye aggravated by itching, showed improvement after treatment with Neo-Poly-Bac-HC, flunixin meglumine (Banamine), and protection by a fly mask. Photos courtesy of PBEC

Types and Triggers of Equine Allergies

An allergy is an immune system response to a typically harmless substance, called an allergen. Allergic reactions can range from mild, gradual annoyances to sudden and severe. Generally, allergies manifest two ways in horses: in the respiratory tract or as topical skin allergies.

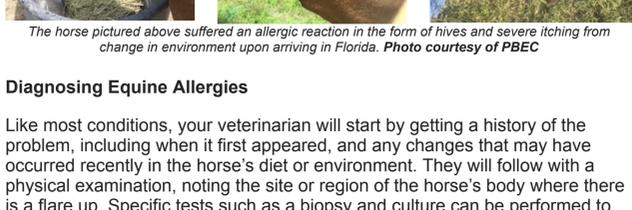
Respiratory allergies are somewhat similar to asthma in humans and are most commonly referred to as inflammatory airway disease. These respiratory allergies are most often caused by environmental allergens, such as dust, mold, and pollen. Nasal discharge, tearing eyes, and coughing can also be linked to respiratory allergies.

An increase in respiratory rate or an increase in respiratory effort, such as labored breathing or exercise intolerance, are two classic signs. Also, when a horse has a thick mucus-like discharge from its nasal passages, it is concerning to veterinarians as it could indicate an infectious type of respiratory illness. A veterinarian can distinguish whether the culprit is an allergen or if there is an underlying mechanical cause of the respiratory issue. Additionally, horses that experience a dramatic change in environment may be affected. For example, those traveling from New York to Florida may suffer from completely different allergens such as tree pollens or smoke caused by the burning of sugarcane fields.



A PBEC patient suffers from a swollen eye due to allergies or a bug bite. Photo courtesy of PBEC

Allergies affecting the skin commonly appear as hives, dermatitis, or hair loss. The administration of topical products as well as a change in the type of stall bedding can trigger such reactions. Topical skin reactions can occur in a specific area or cover the horse's entire body. Allergies to the common bacteria Dermatophilosis can occur resulting in a painful skin condition. Oftentimes, antifungal or bacterial shampoos can help alleviate this reaction. Consulting your veterinarian is key to determining if your horse suffers from allergies that may undermine your horse's health or future.



The horse pictured above suffered an allergic reaction in the form of hives and severe itching from change in environment upon arriving in Florida. Photo courtesy of PBEC

Diagnosing Equine Allergies

Like most conditions, your veterinarian will start by getting a history of the problem, including when it first appeared, and any changes that may have occurred recently in the horse's diet or environment. They will follow with a physical examination, noting the site or region of the horse's body where there is a flare up. Specific tests such as a biopsy and culture can be performed to rule out other skin conditions or causes such as parasites, bacteria, or tumors. A bronchoalveolar lavage (BAL), or a tracheal wash where the veterinarian collects respiratory secretions and then performs a cytology of that fluid, can determine if there are abnormalities or specific types of bacteria causing an infection. Serum (blood) allergy testing or imaging, such as an ultrasound of their chest, may be utilized to assess airway health and function and determine if the cause is allergy related.

As in a visit to the human allergist, horses can undergo intradermal (skin) allergy testing to pinpoint the source of a horse's reaction. For this procedure, the horse has a large patch of hair clipped down on their neck so that tiny amounts of various allergens can be injected into a grid pattern. The veterinarian will examine this grid during different time intervals for signs of an allergic response and determine if a targeted treatment can be taken against those specific allergens.



Veterinarians can run bloodwork to determine causes of allergies. Photo courtesy of PBEC

[Read More via The Plaid Horse](#)

Save the Date: Sport Horse Health and Performance Series

Featuring PBEC's Dr. Jorge Gomez



Sport Horse Health and Performance Series

Join the [Equine High Performance Sports Group](#) for a month-long virtual series featuring some of the top voices in our sport. Learn from industry experts each month as they discuss timely topics such as building a yearly training plan, preparing an athlete for success at a major championship, performance therapy in sport, and more.

Palm Beach Equine Clinic surgeon [Dr. Jorge Gomez](#) will be speaking on a panel discussing organization and implementation of training programs. Other panelists include Beezie Madden, McLain Ward, Anne Kursinski, and Boyd Martin. Watch the sessions live or on demand beginning Monday, May 17.

[Register Here](#)

PBEC in the News

Small Feet, Big Responsibility: Hoof Care for Foals

The Horse

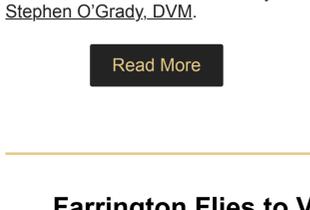


Photo courtesy of PBEC

A youngster's hoof care lays the foundation for his future. Caring for a foal requires specialized knowledge, especially in one area: hoof care. Early care of the feet can greatly affect a foal's monetary value, athletic prospects, and overall soundness, say our sources. Some aspects of foot care can even impact a foal's limb anatomy for life. "A lot of what you do as a foal is going to affect the animal as an adult," says [Stephen O'Grady, DVM](#).

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Horse Saved From Slaughter with Wire Deep in his Leg to Help Veterans in Bright Future

Horse & Hound

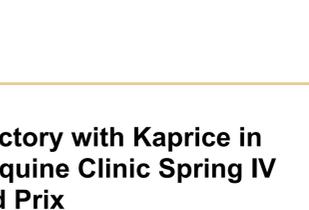


Photo courtesy of PBEC

A horse saved from slaughter with a wire embedded deep in his leg, thought to have been put there intentionally months before, has become a favourite among those who rescued him. Ezekiel, or Zeke, was one of six Belgian draught horses destined for slaughter after a "life of neglect", who were taken in by Baby Girl Horse Rescue and Veteran Therapy Ranch in Fellsmere, Florida, in February.

This heartwarming story was also featured in the [Palm Beach Post](#).

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Farrington Flies to Victory with Kaprice in \$25,000 Palm Beach Equine Clinic Spring IV Grand Prix



Kent Farrington, pictured on Orafina with PBEC's Dr. Caitlin Hosea, won the \$25,000 Palm Beach Equine Clinic ESP Spring IV Grand Prix on Kaprice. Photo by Anne Gittins Photography

On Sunday, May 9, Kent Farrington topped the \$25,000 Palm Beach Equine Clinic ESP Spring IV Grand Prix in Wellington, FL, with Kaprice, an 11-year-old Belgian Warmblood mare co-owned by Farrington and Haity McNerney. This was the second big victory of the week for the pair, after topping the \$5,000 Omega Alpha 1.35m Jumper Stake on Thursday, May 6. Farrington plans to head to Europe this summer to compete in CSIO/CSI observation events for the rescheduled Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games.

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Where Are the Palm Beach Equine Clinic Veterinarians?

Several of our veterinarians have hit the road, offering their services across the United States. Satellite veterinary services can be found throughout the spring and summer in the areas and at the competitions listed below.



- Brandywine Horse Shows - Devon, PA
- Princeton Show Jumping - Princeton, NJ
- HITS Ocala and World Equestrian Center - Ocala, FL
- Saratoga Spring, Classic & Summer Horse Shows - Saratoga, NY
- Kentucky Spring & Summer Horse Shows - Lexington, KY
- Traverse City Horse Shows, Great Lakes Equestrian Festival, and Major League Show Jumping - Williamsburg, MI
- Keeneland Spring Meet - Lexington, KY
- Tryon International Equestrian Center - Tryon, NC
- Lake Placid Horse Show - Lake Placid, NY
- Vermont Summer Festival - East Dorset, VT
- Old Salem Spring & Summer Horse Shows - North Salem, NY

