



Ark Vet Centre

Equine Newsletter



☀ August 2025 ☀

Welcome to the August Newsletter, with show season continuing so has the warm weather and with it flies continue to be a problem. We have seen a few problems related to the heat and flies such as conjunctivitis and infected sheaths although thankfully laminitis seems to be minimal so far. We have also experienced a high number of eye ulcers in horses over the past few weeks so this month we will be discussing these in more detail.

Corneal Ulcers

Corneal ulcers are the most common equine eye condition we see in practice. The cornea is the most superficial (first layer) of the eye but this means it only has the eyelids to protect it making it prone to damage. The cornea acts as a protective barrier for the deeper parts of the eye.

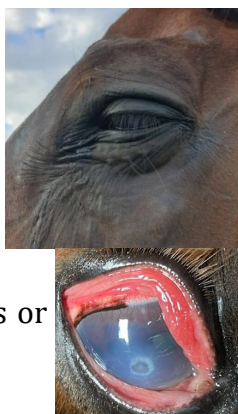
How do ulcers occur?

- * Trauma to the eye such as knocking it
- * Scratching the eye on hay/bedding/tack
- * Foreign body such as thorns/dirt/dust
- * Occasionally secondary to another problem such as ingrowing eyelashes.

Horses that have conditions such as allergies that make them more prone to rubbing or itching may be more prone to getting ulcers.

Clinical signs

A painful eye characterized by, the eye being held shut, watering or weeping. Your horse may become head shy due to the pain. In severe cases you can sometimes see a cloudiness or 'defect' on cornea.



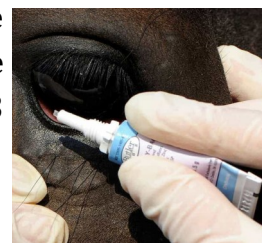
Diagnosis

To diagnose an ulcer we must come out and examine your horse. It is very important that any horse presenting with an acutely painful eye is examined to check for an ulcer as if left untreated they can lead to serious complications. On the visit we will examine the eye and then pop some stain into the eye and this stain will dye any ulcers or scratches up bright green so we can see them.



Treatment

- The sooner we examine an ulcer the better as generally the sooner we start treatment the quicker the ulcer will heal and the lower the chance of getting complications. Ulcers left without treatment can quickly progress to become very deep, non-healing and in the worst cases can ultimately lead to the horse losing their eye.
- Your horse will be started on antibiotic eye drops and some anti-inflammatories (bute) in all cases. Some cases we will add in additional drops such as lubricant (to aid healing) or drops to reduce the cloudiness on the eye if present. Usually drops need to be put in at least twice a day but often 3-4 times a day.



Recovery

Most ulcers heal really well, within a few days to a couple of weeks. Sometimes some scarring may be left behind on the cornea but this doesn't usually affect vision or cause ongoing problems. It is likely your horse will need to be kept in whilst treatment is ongoing but once healed can go back to normal turn out and exercise. Some ulcers require more intervention but this is rare and most heal quickly just with drops.

