

Treating Stifle Injuries with Homoeopathy Dr. John Fudens, HMC, DVM, PH

The stifle is the most complex joint in the horse and other mammals. The front legs support most of the weight of the horse and rider but the rear legs generate the power of movement in the horse. The stifle has two ligaments inside the joint, the anterior cruciate and posterior cruciate. The anterior is the stronger and more powerful of the two. There are also two collateral ligaments on the medial and lateral side of the joint. In addition, there are two tendons, the dorsal and ventral patella tendons that hold the patella in its groove. I have treated a number of horses with stifle injuries. This was a common problem at an equine rescue establishment where I lived and worked while caring for 100 rescue horses. The causes are usual injuries associated with running in pastures, chasing, and play fighting, and weather-related hazards such as snow, mud, and ice in areas where horses are kept. Injuries happen more frequently when horses are not stabled but exposed to the elements every day for 24 hours per day.

Signs of this injury are what one may expect. The horses are lame and if enough ligaments are damaged they are three-legged lame. There is swelling of the whole stifle area, with usually more heat, especially when fresh. The one sign I frequently see is enlargement or swelling of the medial side of the tibial head. I also see this problem in dogs and cats, especially dogs. When I was a conventional veterinarian at my hospital on Long Island New York, I did my share of surgeries in repairing the damage. With the smaller animals one can rock the femur and tibia back and forth gently and get more movement in the joint, which nails the diagnosis. Typical conventional veterinary medical care in horses is X-rays (which are not necessary if one observes the signs) anti-inflammatory drugs like cortisone or Butazolidin, liniment, and stall rest.

At the equine sanctuary we had a 10-year-old, 850-pound Arabian gelding named. "Champ." One winter morning he stood by the barn door on three legs. The right rear leg was off the ground and quite swollen around the stifle. We put him indoors in a stall and found swelling of the medial side of the tibial crest, heat in the joint, and more play in the rocking of the joint. I administered him Arnica 1M, three pellets for three times a day. I give three pellets at a time to the large animals even though one could work energetically. I continued this for four days, until the heat and swelling subsided and he was more comfortable.

I switched him to a program I have used with small and large animals— and humans who do not want surgery. I gave Rhus toxicodendron 200c, three pellets in the morning (sometimes repeated at lunch depending on the severity of the damage) and three pellets of Ruta Graveolens 200c at night (sometimes at dinner first again depending on the severity of the damage). I stayed with this protocol until the horse had 70 to 80 percent use of the leg. I dropped the potency of the remedies down to 100c each until he was walking on the leg almost normally. He was in his stall during this time period. After three months he was walking normally and after six months, running in the pastures. To this day he does not limp. His injury was one of the worst I have ever treated.

In homoeopathy there is an art of applying remedies along with science. The length of treatment varies with each animal. There are other remedies that can be used after Arnica, for example,

Bryonia and Symphytum, but this program works for me every time.

I hope this information helps owners whose horses have this type of injury. The program usually works for other joint afflictions as well. Of special note, this is for acute injuries, not necessarily for arthritis and chronic disease joint conditions.

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