



(845) 225-3100

Mid Hudson
VETERINARY PRACTICE

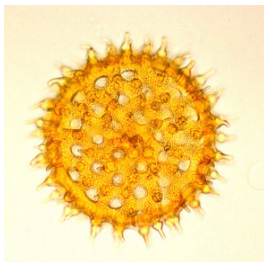
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Late winter and early spring are great times to revisit your horse's past spring/summer allergy management program - and discuss changes and improvements with your veterinarian!

Allergy Relief:

- Frequent Bathing can help
- Quiet the Response with Medications, if necessary
- Use Fly Masks or Sheets as barriers
- Personalized Allergy Shots or Sublingual Drops can help



Pollen Grain

Seasonal Allergies are a major cause of stress to the owner, down-time from the lesson program, and certainly discomfort to the horse. These allergies fall into three categories: 1) Inhaled 2) Ingested and 3) Topical (contact).

They can generate symptoms from all of these organ systems—lungs, intestines, skin and eyes. Pollen allergens are tiny, highly irritating grains that resemble sea urchins- it is quite obvious why they would be so irritating to a tissue such as the cornea or conjunctiva (pink flesh) of the eye; much less the skin of the face and ears, nostrils and upper respiratory tract, lungs, and the lining of the stomach and intestines!

Symptoms of itchy, swollen, red eyes with mucoid discharge (conjunctivitis) and chronic tear-staining can indicate ocular allergies; while chronic dry cough, snorting, head-shaking, wheezing, and loose manure (or watery, manure-stained dis-

charge) can also occur.

The **FIRST** step in control of pollen allergy management lies in frequent bathing with cool water and mild (or even no) soap - essentially removing any topical pollen sticking to the hairs/ skin of the face and body. A cool water bath 1–2 times per week can make a huge difference.

The **SECOND** step involves quieting the response by using antihistamines like hydroxyzine, cetirizine (Zyrtec), and TriHist; topical cortico-steroid creams and sprays such as Genesis; and oral cortico-steroids like dexamethasone (Azium) or prednisone.

The **THIRD** step involves the use of aids such as fly masks and fly sheets because these (while helping with bite prevention) can just act as barriers to pollen grains carried on the breeze.

Because most of these allergies are seasonal, a “ramping up”

effect can be done by using the antihistamines first



(these always work best when started early in the allergy season). The creams and sprays are the second line of defense on the problem areas of the body (face, belly, chest, and groin); thereby leaving the cortico-steroids (which are most effective, but also have the most side effects) for the worst months of the year—July, August, September.

Diets or dietary supplements that are high in Vitamin E and Omega 3 and 6 fatty acids can be helpful in quieting the inflammatory response of the immune system. Some people believe that using local honey can be as helpful in desensitizing horses as it is in humans.

Allergy Injections or Drops

Allergy shots or oral drops are used to desensitize the horse's immune system to the specific reactive allergens for that horse. A blood sample taken at the height of the reaction—whether skin or respiratory—will allow for the most accurate test results. A panel is generated using the responses to the most common fungi, molds, weeds,

trees, grasses, feed components, and a few insect families in our Northeast region. Then a specifically tailored allergy injection vial is generated using the results of this response panel. Allergy shots or sublingual drops are usually started in the winter in the hopes that a notable change can be made in the horse by spring. Clients re-

port an improvement by the second summer in 60% of the cases treated. The injections themselves are low-volume and use a tiny needle under the skin. The drops are administered under the tongue (in an empty mouth) using a little pump or syringe.



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