

GERIATRIC HEALTHCARE



Older equines are often beloved pets and part of the family, who have spent their days giving us endless joy. As they come into their sunset years, being proactive with their health needs and requirements helps us ensure they age comfortably and enjoy their retirement.

Routine Healthcare

Old horses still require routine vaccinations to protect them from tetanus and influenza. They also require regular foot trimming to help maintain healthy hooves, and healthy horses. As horses age, they develop arthritis, may develop more quarter cracks and may get more foot abscesses so keeping feet in good condition can help ensure there is no inappropriate or excessive forces on their joints and keep them comfortable.

Old horses need regular deworming. In fact, as they are more likely to develop weaker immune systems, sometimes they need different worming regimes to younger horses. Consult with your vet to ensure that parasites remain controlled so old horses stay healthy.

Dentistry is also very important. Geriatrics need at least annual dentals, often more frequently as they develop periodontal disease and lose teeth. Managing a healthy body condition for older horses can often become a challenge, so ensuring good dental care is paramount.

Arthritis

Old animals tend to develop arthritic changes, and our horses are no different. Stiffness and overt lameness are often what we are presented with as this occurs. There are many options available for addressing arthritis as it occurs so please discuss with your vets so that a good, whole horse approach can be tailored for your animals.

Weight Management

Keeping older horses in good condition, especially as winter approaches is often a challenge. Ensure you have a good worming regime and that dentals are completed as often as recommended by your vet. The nutritional requirements of older horses change depending on each animal and their individual factors (e.g. dentition) so make sure you have a discussion with a vet about your old equine.

Where appropriate, keeping older horses active to maintain muscle mass can be beneficial to maintaining long term soundness. A proper diet and exercise regime can keep our aged equines mobile and happy for a long time!

Cushings

Cushings is the term given colloquially to the disease process called "pituitary pars intermedia dysfunction" or PPID. It is something that we see in our older horse population and is essentially, the loss of dopamine inhibition of ACTH (a hormone). This causes lethargy, abnormal coat shedding, long coats, excessive sweating, muscle wastage, and laminitis. Additionally, these horses can be immunosuppressed so more likely to pick up infections and parasites.

Getting older is part of life, and there are many ways we can help our older equine population enjoy their retirement years. For more information, or to arrange a visit with one of our equine vets, please contact Seadown Vets.



Delivering first-class veterinary care to the New Forest since 1923

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