

# Damory Veterinary Clinic

## Equine Newsletter

### Damory Veterinary Clinic

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- Top tips on sedating your horse
- Atypical myopathy
- Winter feeding advice

A Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you all.



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## Top Tips For Sedating Your Horse

At this time of year horses are more frequently sedated for procedures such as clipping. Here are our top tips to help you achieve success:

### Veterinary visit:

This option allows immediate heavy sedation to be given via an intravenous injection. The vet can stay to administer top-ups to ensure that the horse does not suddenly come round.



### Sedalin:

Sedalin contains the drug *Acepromazine* (ACP) which is a mild tranquiliser. It can be enough to 'take the edge off' nervous horses. It is given orally using the dosing syringe.

Increasing the dose does not make the horse more sleepy, it just lasts longer!



### Domosedan gel:

Compared to Sedalin this is a true sedative and an oral version of what a vet will inject. It is more effective than Sedalin. Also the effects can last for several hours so horses will need monitoring for a long time after its administration.

It must be given under the tongue rather than swallowed.



## Whichever method you choose, here are some handy hints:

- Have a **safe area** with good footing (e.g. rubber matting) for the horse while sedated.
- Give the sedative to a **calm horse** and leave in a **quiet environment** before attempting to clip. Wait 40 minutes after giving domosedan gel and at least one hour after administering sedalin.
- **Reduce unnecessary stimulation**, (consider putting cotton-wool in your horse's ears.)
- Start clipping your horse's neck and shoulder, then move on to the more sensitive areas while your horse is most sleepy; leave the 'easy' bits until last.
- If your horse begins to wake up, turn off the clippers and leave him for a few minutes. He may go back to sleep enough to finish the job!
- A sedated horse can **still behave unpredictably** and kick!
- Withhold food for **two hours** after sedation has been given.

## Winter Feeding Advice



Horses with a good winter coat will cope with the cold if they are healthy and have good teeth (hopefully checked at the annual vaccination).

All horses rely on utilising fibre in their diet to generate heat rather like a boiler during the cold weather. The diet should contain at least **1.5%** of their weight as forage daily:

A 400kg riding horse will need at least 6kg or 13lb of grass and/or hay/haylage/grass replacer each day.

Clipped horses and thin horses (youngsters, el-

derly) will need more fibre to keep warm.

Horses with poor teeth (e.g. molars worn out from age) should have fibre provided that doesn't require as much chewing. Products such as **Fast Fibre** from Allen and Page or **Fibre Plus Nuggets** from Baileys are ideal.

Hard food balancers are important and are helpful to supply minerals and vitamins. Products such as **Alfalfa Plus Oil** from Baileys are especially useful as they contain higher levels of oil with calories.

You can simply add any

vegetable oil to the diet to provide valuable slow release energy. Introduce slowly and build up to a maximum of 1ml per kg body-weight.

Don't forget that a 500kg horse only has a stomach the size of a rugby ball. Split feeds into two or three times daily rather than a huge one.

Use warm water if possible to soak feeds. This will improve palatability during cold weather. Remember to check water buckets and troughs that might freeze when it gets bitterly cold.

## Atypical Myopathy (sycamore poisoning)

We have recently treated some cases of this disease in the Autumn. We have e-mailed clients a factsheet about the disease but if you have missed it please see our Facebook or website pages.

Please take time to familiarize yourself with the signs to look out for and importantly how to prevent it.

Essentially the focus is on preventing the consumption of sycamore seeds and leaves:

- Feed supplementary forage (e.g. hay) as the grazing quality declines
- Reduce stocking density to prevent overgrazing
- Reduce paddock sizes and Hoover/

remove leaves/seeds

- Fence off areas around sycamore trees
- Inspect fields for any seeds or leaves that may have blown in from distant trees
- Reduce time spent grazing, perhaps to six hours or less

