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Educating Horse Owners: Symptoms, Diagnosis, and Treatment of Colitis



Fluid therapy is typically necessary for equine colitis cases. Photo courtesy of PBEC

It's no secret that in nearly any medical condition, early diagnosis can lead to a better prognosis — and colitis in horses is no exception. The inflammation of the colon that defines colitis can be fatal, although fortunately, with the proper detection of symptoms and immediate treatment, a positive outcome and recovery far outweigh a negative ending.

Understanding colitis — the symptoms, diagnostics, and treatment — can help in recognizing the condition. Palm Beach Equine Clinic's Dr. Selina Watt has helped provide some fundamental information that horse owners and barn managers should be aware of in regards to equine colitis.

Understanding Colitis and Its Causes

Located in the equine hindgut is the large colon, where microbial digestion and water absorption occurs. The large colon averages 12 feet in length and can hold approximately 20 gallons of feed material and water. When the colon becomes inflamed, the horse is diagnosed with colitis.

While the general definition of colitis is simple and straightforward, the causes can be broader. However, two of the most prevalent causes of colitis are bacterial infections or overuse of medication. Colitis from infectious bacteria is often caused by agents such as Salmonella, Clostridium difficile, or Neorickettsia risticii (Potomac Horse Fever). The non-infectious, right dorsal colitis is often related to the use of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs such as phenylbutazone (Bute).

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Congratulations to Wellington International Winners



Luiza Leivas and Novak de Kalvarie were victorious in the \$25,000 Palm Beach Equine Clinic National Grand Prix. Photo by Sportfot

Luiza Leivas (BRA) and Novak de Kalvarie, owned by Bonne Chance Farm LLC, claimed top honors in the \$25,000 Palm Beach Equine Clinic National Grand Prix during the ESP Pre-Charity show in Wellington, FL. Thirty horse-and-rider combinations tackled the first round course set by FEI Level 3 course designer, Hector Loyola (PUR), with five pairs managing a fault-free effort. In the end, Leivas and her mount were the only pair to produce a clear jump-off round to top the podium.

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Claire Bakewell and Dillandra won the \$2,500 NAL Medium Junior/Amateur Jumper Classic, sponsored by Palm Beach Equine Clinic. Photo by Sportfot

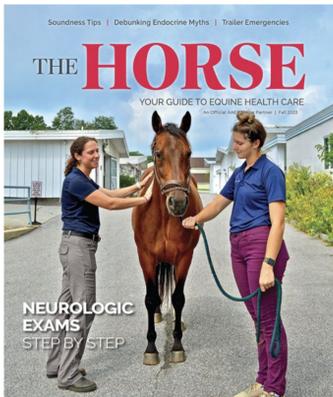
Claire Bakewell and Dillandra, owned by Bully Lane LLC, secured the blue ribbon in the \$2,500 NAL Medium Junior/Amateur Jumper Classic, sponsored by Palm Beach Equine Clinic, during the ESP November show in Wellington, FL.

During the ESP Fall Finale, Estella Bonanni piloted her own Lilly Pezy to victory in the \$2,500 NAL Medium Junior/Amateur Jumper Classic, sponsored by Palm Beach Equine Clinic.

[View ESP November Results](#)

[View ESP Fall Finale Results](#)

PBEC In the Media



"Understanding Equine SDFT Injuries"

"The tendon is really like this big group of lots of elastic bands," explains Christopher Elliott, BVSc (hons), MANZCVS, Dipl. ACVSMR, of Palm Beach Equine Clinic, in Wellington, Florida.

Learn about this tendon's complex anatomy and how veterinarians rehab it when injured in this article from the Summer 2023 issue of The Horse.

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Catch Up With PBEC on Instagram



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 pbequineclinic Having a reliable and trustworthy veterinarian by your side is important whether your horse is an Olympic athlete or a pasture petter. Palm Beach Equine Clinic provides general care and preventative medicine to help keep your horse healthy and happy throughout their life. Building a long-term relationship with a veterinarian who understands your unique horse can be extremely beneficial in identifying and treating issues as soon as possible. 🐾

Palm Beach Equine Clinic Works With AcutePlus



AcutePlus is a veterinary Wellness Membership Plan offered through Palm Beach Equine Clinic. The program is designed to give veterinarians practices a way to create a customized annual plan that they can offer directly to their clients and patients. AcutePlus provides veterinary discounts, equine protection, and equine loss protection.

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