

Swiftsure Equine Veterinary Services

Dr. Danica Olenick, DVM, Dr. Kaitlin McDonald, DVM & Dr. Reina Fennell, DVM

Alternative therapies for gastric ulcers:

Products that are mucosal protectants:

1. The Equitop Pronutrin is a mucosal protectant and can be used as a preventative as well as to potentially help with healing. Cost is \$91.81 for a two week supply at the full dose which is recommended to potentially heal ulcers. It is given at a dose of 50 g per 100 kg body weight daily for 2-4 weeks minimum.
2. SmartGut Ultra Pellets in addition to the Pectin and Lecithin in Pronutrin will have sea buckthorn and aloe vera, Calcium carbonate, Magnesium carbonate and silicate, Slippery Elm, Marshmallow Root extract and Lactobacillus, therefore possible probiotic and antacid effects. It apparently has better palatability than the Pronutrin. It is given at a dose of 80 grams (2 scoops) a day for the average size horse. It can be ordered online (e.g. Amazon.ca).
3. L-Glutamine: Give 20 grams a day orally. This can be supplied either though L-Glutamine supplement from a human health food store or in products such as Succeed (Greenhawk) or Equine Choice Probiotics, which can be obtained though us, but to reach the recommended 20 grams/ day you would need to feed 40 scoops/day which would make the cost per day close to the cost of gastrogard and I would guess be hard to convince your horse to eat that much powder.

Products that are antacids:

1. Assureguard Gold contains Psyllium seed husk, antacid (calcium carbonate), probiotics, prebiotics, and enzymes. It is given initially twice a day (1.5 scoops) and then maintenance decrease this to once a day. It is usually given as a top dressing when giving grain or can be given as a treat prior to exercise. Cost is about \$335 for a 55 serving container. This is available in Canada, but we will have to inquire about shipping if you are interested in it.
2. Purina Outlast contains alfalfa, wheat middlings, seaweed-derived calcium, cane molasses, magnesium oxide, and citric acid and is designed to control the pH in the stomach. It acts quickly to bring the pH of the stomach above 4.0. It is recommended to top-dress his regular feed or fed as a snack prior to exercise or a stressful event. It is recommended to feed 20 grams per 50 Kg, 3-4 times a day. It is meant to top-dress each meal and then 30-60 minutes before riding or other stressful event. This can take the place of antacid and alfalfa prior to exercise. This is not available in Canada. Owners can get it by travelling across the border to Lynden where there are 3 Purina dealers

Products to prevent glandular ulcers from developing in the future:

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1. Corn Oil or Canola oil can be given at a dose of up to 1 cup twice a day, gradually increase the amount fed.
2. RegenerEq is a combination of oils, Sunflower oil, Flax, mixed vitamin E, and silica. It is given at a dose of 15-20 mls orally twice a day for 30 days and then 15 mls once a day for 2 months, some horses stay on the once a day therapy indefinitely. This product can usually be found at Greenhawk.

Various Management:

1. A free fed mixture of grass and alfalfa hay seems to be superior to either hay alone for healing of ulcers.
2. Grazing on pasture has benefits for ulcers, even if just for a few minutes a day in hand.
3. Feed the least amount of grain possible to maintain athletic performance and weight. Grain should only be fed once he has eaten hay so that it provides a buffer against the acid.
4. An antacid (e.g. Tums, Purina Outlast, AssureGuard Gold, etc.) can also be given 30 – 60 minutes prior to exercise to decrease any discomfort of acid being splashed up with exercise.

Another alternative to using Gastrogard is to use a compounded omeprazole either in a paste or liquid. This is substantially less expensive, but it doesn't contain the same buffering to protect the drug through digestion as gastrogard does so it may be less effective. Cost per day of the liquid is \$7.20 at full dose which is usually administered for 25 days. Cost per day of the past at full dose is \$10.07, which we usually sell 30 days worth. Both may require tapering off doses.