

**EQUUS**

**SCAD Equestrian**

Preparing students for careers in the far-reaching equine industry.

scad.edu/equestrian

**SCAD**  
The University for Creative Careers.

Log In | Sign Up

SEARCH

News | Horse Care | Riding & Training | Trail Riding | Farm & Ranch | Tack & Apparel | Community | Resources | Magazines | Shop



- Online Extras
- Print Subscription
- Digital Subscription
- Give a Gift
- Renew
- Customer Service
- E-Newsletter
- Advertiser Index

**Next Issue**

February 2011

- Riding solo safely
- NYPD horses in retirement
- Investigating horse colors
- How your horse's dewormer could harm your dog
- CASE REPORT: A gelding recovers from two serious hoof injuries**
- PREVENTION: Dental problems**
- MEDICINE CHEST: Tiludronate**

**Books & DVDs**

from HorseBooksEtc



Legends of the West, Special Edition American Cowboy

Price \$13.00

BUY NOW

Home > Horse Care > Health > Winter Care

Share 1

**Fighting equine respiratory and skin problems in winter**

By the Editors of EQUUS magazine

**Sound equine management will keep your horse free from respiratory difficulties and irritating skin conditions this winter.**

With all your winter-wear, your lotions, vitamins, flu shots, your heated gym, office and home, you're living in the lap of luxury compared to your horses in the winter. Even in regions where temperatures remain moderate throughout the winter, horses suffer from ailments similar to those that plague their owners, including runny noses, chapped skin, the flu and even cabin fever.

The irony is that many of the horses' winter-related problems are initiated or exacerbated by their owners' good intentions: In trying to keep their horses as warm and dry as the hairless human deems comfortable, they drape naturally insulated animals in blankets, seal them up in airtight barns and stuff them with scoop after scoop of grain. Indeed, most of the wintertime woes that plague horses could be prevented with some simple management changes.

Consider these seasonal troublemakers and some winterizing tactics that work with horse nature, not against it.

**Respiratory Difficulties**

Good air quality is essential to the health of a stabled horse no matter what the season of year. But in winter, when your inclination is to cover windows and vents, disconnect fans and shut barn doors, inadequate ventilation can cause serious respiratory problems.



Turn out, even in snowy conditions, is essential to maintaining your horse's health.  
Photo © EQUUS Magazine

Advertisement

Available now,  
only through  
your veterinarian.

Click Here for  
More Information →

doors and windows, experiment with combinations of openings to let in air without blasting the inhabitants with wind and precipitation.

A properly installed mechanical system should change the interior air without causing drafts. Cool fresh air may make you shiver, but it's much healthier for stabled horses than stagnant, dust- and fume-filled air trapped unchanged within a sealed building.

A horse becomes chilled when he loses body heat too quickly, most commonly immediately after exercise on a windy and/or cold, low-humidity day. Without adequate cooldown after exertion, the mechanisms for dispersing body heat do not reverse quickly enough into the heat-conserving mode--hair coat dry, erect and fluffy; superficial blood circulation curtailed. This rapid heat loss drops the horse's body temperature to below normal and knocks a chink in his immune defenses.

FROM EQUUS

Subscribe Today and Save!

Subscribe to EQUUS



Subscribe Today & Get a Free Gift!

SUBSCRIBE

Give a Gift  
Customer Service

**PURINA**

Click to expand

Where you finish depends on how you start!

**The Facts About Purina® Ultium® Growth Formula**

This dynamic feed delivers scientifically balanced nutrition for broodmares and foals.

Earn FREE Purina Rewards

\*The data and findings shared by Purina are based upon controlled tests and field trials. Actual results may vary due to factors such as genetics and management practices. Ultium is a registered trademark of Purina Mills. ©2010 Purina Mills, LLC

**EquiSearch.com Partners**

American Association of Equine Practitioners

**Related Topics**

from the Forums

- Best feed for my horse?
- Horse Care Tips & Tricks
- Buy Price reduction Tee Occasions and Function Tickets Online At this time
- Horse Care Tips & Tricks
- Thanks to my wonderful barn owner
- Road to the Ride
- Guttural Pouch Tympany
- Best feed for my horse?

**Free Newsletters**

Sign Up for our Free Newsletters

SIGN ME UP

[View Privacy Policy](#)

A good rule of thumb for cold-weather riding is to spend twice as long on cooldown following sweat-making exertion as you would during fair weather. Then cover him with a cooler or quarter sheet to retain body heat until his heat-conserving mechanisms kick in. A lofting layer of straw between the blanket and wet skin encourages air circulation and reduces clamminess.

**Skin Conditions**

Winter's increased humidity and precipitation added to well-insulated (by nature or nurture) skin create an ideal breeding ground for the agents of skin disease. The following conditions generally afflict horses when they're at their woolliest:

**Rainrot**--crusted, painful, infectious skin inflammation, caused by *Dermatophilus* organisms and triggered when small to moderate amounts of moisture, insufficient to thoroughly cleanse, fall onto a dirty, neglected coat; scabbing and hair loss often follow rain runoff patterns.

**Bed itch**--dermatitis producing crusty, sore spots on parts of the body that make contact with soiled bedding, typically the thighs and elbows.

**Ringworm**--a contagious fungal infection causing scaling of skin and hair loss in roughly circular patches.

**Scratches**--scabby and/or oozing skin inflammation on the back of the pastern above the heels, caused by overexposure to moisture and loss of protective skin oils.

**Lice**--blood-sucking parasites that thrive in the thick, unkempt coats of unthrifty, stressed horses; associated itch drives horses to rub and bite their skin raw; coat is matted with dandruff and slightly waxy to the touch.

Preventing skin problems in winter is a matter of cleanliness and diligence. Blankets, tack, grooming equipment and common living quarters can spread the contagious conditions or repeatedly re-infect the same horse unless you eliminate these infectious agents. Consult with your veterinarian about disinfectants and other treatment strategies if one or more of your horses comes down with skin crud. Keep your horses, the stalls and all the equipment that comes in contact with them clean and dry, and you'll avoid the vast majority of seasonal skin disorders.

This article originally appeared in the January 1997 issue of EQUUS magazine.

Posted in Winter Care|EQUUS|Comments Off

 **Equus Magazine** on Facebook  
 Like 8,489

Share |

**Related Articles**

- Removing Mud Stains During Winter
- Protect Your Horse from Ice-Related Injuries
- Make the Most of Winter Turnout for your Horse

Comments are closed.

- American Youth Horse Council
- Kentucky Horse Park
- My Horse University
- O'Connor Event Team
- U. S. Dressage Federation
- U. S. Equestrian Federation
- U. S. Eventing Association
- U. S. Hunter Jumper Association

**Free Newsletters**

Sign Up for our Free Newsletters

[View Privacy Policy](#)


SIGN ME UP



**SUBSCRIBE TO EQUUS AND GET A FREE GIFT!**

Get 12 issues of **EQUUS** for only **\$14.97!**  
 Plus a **FREE** downloadable booklet!

**SAVE 73%**  
OFF THE COVER PRICE



First Name:

Last Name:

Address Line 1:

Address Line 2:

City:

State:

Zip:

Email:

Credit Card  Bill me later

SUBMIT MY ORDER

Offer valid in US only.  
 Canadian subscriptions | International subscriptions