

3 Steps in treating Canker in horses

Step 1. Surgical debridement of the canker followed up by medicated canker powder for 28 days. Powder amount in a 1-gallon bucket treats 2 feet in a draft horse. See details below.

Step 2.

- A. Oral Doxycycline given 2 times a day for 30 days. 5-gram apple flavored foil packs with powder inside are opened, put in feed 2 times a day (for a 1,000-pound horse). Cost is approximately \$100 a month for this treatment.
- B. Source of Doxy for vet to call: Wedgewood Pharmacy at 1-800-331-8272 to set up. This is started the same day as Day 1 of medicated canker powder.
- C. Oral doxycycline is mandatory in helping clear canker. Oral doxycycline inside the body and medicated canker powder on top of the canker is a powerful combination. Doxy needs to be ordered by your vet and in the barn ready to go prior to medicated canker powder being sent. Once doxy is in place and Dr. Reilly consults with the barn vet, the protocol for medicated canker powder can begin. Prior to doxy arriving, desiccating canker powder is used to remove moisture from the foot which helps in pathogen control. Contains MSM, vitamin E, magnesia, matricaria.

Step 3. Single dose of Ivermectin oral paste (dose by the body weight like regular deworming). This is to address possible nematode aspect that can be a part of canker. This is done Day 1 of medicated canker powder.

Protocol for Medicated Canker Powder

Step 1 Specifics:

- Many canker horses are sore from inflamed tissues in foot and from standing unusual to get weight off sore areas. NSAIDS can be used while on this protocol.
- To start, first understand the most important concept to healing: keeping the foot dry, dry, dry is the key.
- Usually do not need to sedate or block the foot for all 28 days,
 - A. Day 1: Pack the medicated canker powder into the foot so approximately 3/4th of an inch of powder covers the entire sole and frog. You can use duct tape in the hoof wall to “bank in” this amount so it does not drop off over the hoof wall. Next, put a ½ inch thick of Kendall practical cotton over the powder, vet wrap in place and duct tape over the entire thing. It will be slightly mounded when done and looking down on it – good – so as the horse steps down, powder is pressing

deep into canker. The horse will flatten within seconds of stepping down and will not be painful.

***Day 1, there is no surgery

***Day 1-28, the horse is kept in a dry environment such as a stall with shavings, a round pen with dry material, an indoor/outdoor ring with dry material, or a small dirt lot with no mud. (1/3rd acre or less).

No grass that can get wraps wet.

No mud.

No turnout in rain, snow.

No big field with too much exercise to tear through wrap.

Avoid straw bedding due to urine pooling being more common.

B. Day 2 and 3: Remove packing with a soft toothbrush, do not want tissues to become irritated. No hoof picks – too deep. You can use a blow dryer to dry powder off, making it easier to remove with your hands. No hoof knife to remove powder.

C. Day 4: Remove packing – tissues will smell better, and often growths/proud flesh will have receded by 25%.

Time to surgically debride/resect growths.

In mild/moderate cases, a tourniquet is not needed – in profound involvement, a tourniquet can be helpful to be able to see the field easier. In profound cases needing 20-30 minutes of resecting, the vet may sedate the horse in order to help them stand still/quiet.

Now the vet or farrier (if trained) will use a new scalpel blade for each foot (may need several a foot if they dull quickly) and gently trim canker flat, level of the sole or to normal frog tissue. For some tissue, use a clean hoof knife. These tissues will bleed, and you may see 1 cup of blood per foot on the floor in profound cases – that is normal and is NOT a dangerous blood loss amount in a 500 pound or greater horse. You will use 4 x 4's to wipe the field to remove abnormal tissue. These hyperkeratotic growths have little/no nerve supply but are vascular and bleed. When done, repeat the duct tape wall and place in 3/4th inch of powder, wrap as usual.

As foot is placed on ground, blood may seep out of bandage, but this will slow and stop in 15 minutes.

In 2 hours after doing the wrap, you will remove the packing and gently remove the bloody powder. It will ooze a small amount only – now repack in clean, fresh powder and wrap.

- D. Day 5,6,7: Remove pack, replace powder, pack.
- E. Day 8: Leave it. No changing.
- F. Day 9: Remove pack, replace powder, pack.
- G. Day 10: Leave it. No changing.
- H. Day 11: Remove pack, replace powder, pack.
- I. Day 12: Leave it. No changing
- J. Day 13: Remove packing, do debriding #2. New scalpel blades for each foot, really make sure the tissue is flat to sole level. Pack, wrap in 2 hours; remove the bloody pack and powder, repack in fresh powder like last time.
- K. Day 14 and 15: Remove and repack.
- L. Day 16: Leave it, no changing.
- M. Day 17, 19, 22, 25, and 28: Remove and repack.
- N. Day 18, 20, 21, 23, 24, 26, and 27: Leave it, no changing.