



Equine Medical and Surgical Associates  
Canker Protocol  
30 Days to Clearing

Overview:

1. The success depends on communication – we will talk to you the owner, get history, have you send photos, get your barn vets name and phone number – we require your barn vets OK to send the canker powder due to antibiotics in it and due to we understand your barn vet is in charge and will want to go over with us the steps needed for debriding, oral doxycycline...
2. One bucket will clear 2 feet of canker – if you have 3+ feet to treat, first treat the front end (1 or 2 feet) over 30 days, then do the back feet over 30 days. The canker powder comes in a 1 gallon bucket.
3. In order to help in clearing canker, several steps will be done on top of just doing the canker powder – these all have benefits in either reducing viral load aspect or reducing spirochete aspect or in enhancing antibiotic action.
  - A. Oral Doxycycline – your barn vet will order this. Given 2x/day for 30 days. Small foil packs of apple flavored powder in feed – dose in horses 1000+ pounds is 5 grams AM + 5 grams PM. **\*No Doxy in pregnant, maybe pregnant or nursing mares.**
  - B. Source of Doxy for your vet: Wedgewood Pharmacy 1-800-331-8272 to order 60 packs of their 5/10 Doxy Powder (5 grams Doxy + 5 grams apple powder = 10 grams total per foil pack). I understand this dose is “light” in draft/draft crosses for certain other diseases, but it’s effective in helping in canker.  
**\*Oral Doxy is Mandatory.**  
Doxy shown in our studies to reduce clearing time from 60 days to 30 days. Shown to have effect against spirochetes and also papilloma virus, both in all canker.
  - C. Ivermectin oral deworming paste – in rare cases, worms (nematodes) can be involved in canker and Ivermectin can help in reducing bulk tissues of canker. Day 1, day 7, day 14, day 21, day 28 – deworm 1x/week, for 5 total times. Cheap/easy/simple.
  - D. Ration Balancers – these are higher in protein to help in recovery of normal hoof sole/frog/wall – all of which is mostly protein. We need to increase production of normal tissue to rapidly cover over areas where canker has been removed. 1000 pound horse – 3 cups a day (8oz. cup like in baking) = 1 pound. Many brands for you to put in feed – Purina Enrich Plus, Triple Crown 30 balancer, Nutrena

Empower Topline, Tribute Essential K, Buckeye Gro N win...are examples. Call us if you need other options.

### Pointers to help in success:

1. If your horse is sore right now before start, you can use Nsaids while on this program – why? We need your horse fully stepping down with full weight to push that powder into crevices and to repel back proud flesh mushrooming. Best one? Equioxx – 1x/day, easy on stomach, effective in foot pain.
2. #1 principle to success = Dry, Dry, Dry. We are depriving bacteria and abnormal tissue of water they need to survive like in a bowl of sugar or salt, bacteria is not seen in the bowl due to not enough water to live in it.  
50% of horses on protocol stay in a stall 30 days to ensure dry wraps – soggy/muddy wraps will fail to clear canker. Turn out only in a dry lot/indoor/clean round pen – avoid dewy grass, mud holes, if raining, stay in stall that day.
3. Day 1-30 dry environment, stall of deep shavings. Can go in an indoor of dry footing, small dirt lot with no mud.
  - No grass turn out, no big field turnout – will chop through wraps if out too long.
  - No mud
  - No turnout in rain/snow
  - No straw bedding – encourages urine pooling which will get wrap wet.
4. Packing foot
  - A. Pack canker powder to level of hoof wall so approx. 3/4 inch of powder covers entire sole and frog. You can use duct tape to “bank in the powder” around the hoof wall.
  - B. Next, put a 1/2 inch thick piece of Kendall practical cotton (a cotton roll) over the powder and vet wrap in place, duct tape over that, done.  
\*no diapers, no hospital plates to hold in powder, Diapers too bulky, powder falls out, hospital plates trap moisture so too wet.  
We want that wrap slightly mounded up when done, so when horses steps down, powder pushing into canker will flatten in 2 seconds after steps on it – will not be painful.  
\*Do not “sugar coat” the area like a powdered donut – that will fail – need a thick mat of powder.

### Schedule

Day 1: There is no surgery. Pack canker powder as explained above.

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

previous day repack as explained above. We are drying up canker to visualize stalk, remove moisture, reduce bacterial load prior to debride.

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

Time to surgically debride/resect growths. Debride #1.

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 (especially in hind feet).

Now the vet or farrier will debride. I recommend a clean, sharpened hoof knife. Scalpel blades snap often especially around the sole. Gently trim canker flat, level of the sole or to normal frog tissue. Only taking off flat to sole on frog – not digging underneath, not creating a concave “hole” only leveling off. 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 3/4<sup>th</sup> 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.

Day 5,6,7: Remove pack, replace powder, pack.

Day 8: Leave it. No changing.

Day 9: Remove pack, replace powder, pack.

Day 10: Leave it. No changing.

Day 11: Remove pack, replace powder, pack.

Day 12: Leave it. No changing

Day 13: Remove packing, do debriding #2. Make sure the tissue is flat to sole level. Pack, wrap for 2 hours; remove the bloody pack and powder, repack in fresh powder like last time. Old canker will crumble out easily. Often there is no blood on debride #2 – if so, only need pack once today.

Day 14 and 15: Remove and repack.

Day 16: Leave it, no changing.

Day 17, 19, 22 and 25: Remove and repack.

Day 18, 20, 21, 23, 24, 26, and 27: Leave it, no changing.

Day 28: Remove packing. **Canker should be cleared.**

New routine to repel canker returns: What are you doing to stop canker return?

1. 2x/week paint all 4 feet on soles/frog with Venice of Turpentine – toughens feet/anti septic. Cheap/easy – pennies a day.
2. 2x/year deworm with Equimax to eliminate any possible worm aspects of Canker sources – do 1x in spring + 1x in fall. Also gets bots and tapeworms that fecal tests miss.
3. Add 1 scoop a day of Health-E (strongest Vitamin E in USA for horses) – is 5700 IU of vitamin E in a scoop – boost immune system, #1 anti-oxidant of skin. Cheap/easy – 97 cents a scoop.
4. Routine trims not to exceed 5 weeks between trims – reduces walled off areas that can become start of canker.
5. Test Thyroid/get on Thyrol powder. In all these canker horses, on testing total T4, see low end of normal results – range at Cornell is 1-3, so 1.2 for example is “ low normal”, we need high normal at 2.5 – 3.0. Why? Adding Thyrol is an immune booster. Why is your horse with canker and 10 other horses at barn don't have? Poor immune system – so in a 500+ pound horse start at 2 scoops a day in AM 1x a day = 24mg a day. Retest in 30 days to see if high normal. On for life, cheap – 60 cents a day. A C- low normal is not A. Not accept “its normal on tests” – see numbers, ideal want A+.
6. Stay on ration balancer to increase hoof quality.

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Note: I do not use or recommend oral steroids (prednisolone).

The study of its use:

33% success rate

66% fall rate (reoccurred)

20% euthanasia rate

This study is on our website – can download.

Also, steroids create an increase in papilloma virus.

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2022 Note: Special thanks to Dave Giza, farrier for his great knowledge and skill with designing canker strategy – his idea to add Doxy in these cases 15 years ago, cut clearing from 60 days to 30 days. He was the inspiration that pushed the project to address problem in all veterinary books that canker was a grave prognosis often leading to euthanasia. His debridement techniques and doing tow debride months a few weeks apart was a game changer.

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Our website at equinemed surg.com has dozens of articles on canker to read, download, see specific ingredients in canker powder. See photos of cases to know what to expect.

