

EQUINE CHIROPRACTIC



HOW DO
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While approaching the end of my first decade in private practice, I decided to expand my knowledge to include our four (4) legged animals. Don't they need chiropractic care also? They have spinal columns, a spinal cord and peripheral nerves. If we get vertebral misalignments, they must get them also. While getting my certification, my human patients always asked the same few questions. "Hey Doc, how do I know that my horse needs to be adjusted (align the spine)?" I would ask them the same questions. "How do you know that YOU need to be adjusted?" They would respond by saying that they had pain, stiffness, diminished range of motion, lethargy, they were miserable and did not feel good overall.

Chiropractic is the art, science and philosophy that the nervous system controls everything in your body. The nervous system consists of the central nervous system (brain and spinal cord) and the peripheral nervous system (peripheral nerves). Nerve signals get transmitted from the brain to the periphery for motor functions (movements, etc) and from the periphery to the brain to transmit pain signals. Chiropractors use the term "vertebral subluxations" to explain what happens when the nervous system is not at its "optimum" or is in a state of "dis-ease." The subluxation process has five (5) components. The first is termed "spinal kinesio-pathology" or lack of vertebral motion. The spinal segments need to be "in motion" for them to function properly. Fixations result in lack of range of motion and are the beginning of the subluxation process. The second phase is "spinal myopathology." This describes muscle spasms that occur along with the fixations. Next, there is "spinal histopathology." This is a simple term for inflammation and swelling. This occurs during the first 48-72 hours of an acute injury. The fourth

phase is "spinal neuropathology." This describes pain, weakness in the extremities and all problems that are nerve related. Finally, we have "spinal pathophysiology." This is the state of dis-ease that we were talking about above. It is at this state that we get the phone call to go see a horse. Since this problem most likely took months to develop, we have to explain to horse owners that most problems do not get fixed overnight. The biggest difference that chiropractic has with allopathic medicine is that we find and fix the cause of a problem, not just help the animal cope with the pain by way of pain medication

So, the question remains, how does one know that their horse needs to be seen by a chiropractor. The answer is relatively easy. Just look for the signs. Lameness issues. How does he look at the walk, trot, canter and gallop? Is one side being favored compared to the other side? Is there visible limping? How is the horse's demeanor? Is he miserable and non responsive to commands? Is he bucking or holding up? Does



he not want to be under saddle? Teach

my students and educate my horse owners that the number one cause of vertebral subluxations and muscle spasms in the horse are poor fitting saddles. Most horse owners purchase saddles for their comfort and not for the comfort of the horses. Is his performance off? Is he not as agile as he was? Is he compensating on the good side because another side hurts? Does he pin his ears when you touch him in certain places which may be sore, painful and inflamed? All of these are a beginning to decide whether your horse is in a non-opt-

imal state of health and should be seen by a chiropractor to have his spine aligned. Length and frequency of visits obviously are case by case. Depending on the issue, how acute or chronic it is, the severity of the problem, ages of the horse, etc will decide on how much treatment the horse requires.

In conclusion, chiropractic care fixes the cause of neuromusculoskeletal problems by aligning the spinal column. We believe that the spinal column houses and protect the most important system in the body, the nervous system. Without optimal spinal health, the horse will be in a state of disease and will not be able to function at its optimum.

Therefore, periodic chiropractic adjustments are excellent choice for prevention, maintenance and overall spinal health.

***Does your horse
pin his ears back?***

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