

Happy Holidays!



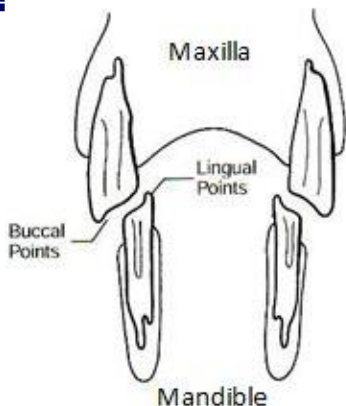
FLOATING INTO F “aaaaahhhhhh” LL

By Amanda Eason, DVM

As the leaves are showing shades of deep red, yellow, and orange, we are reminded as good horse owners that fall is upon us. The crisp air is almost like a date on the calendar because it means vaccinations and time for yearly dental care.



Why do horse's teeth need to be floated? Due to the anatomy of the horse's head, the top jaw (maxilla) is wider than the bottom jaw (mandible), therefore the teeth do not sit directly on top of one another. Horses have hypsodont-type teeth that are slightly softer material than carnivore teeth. Hypsodont teeth have relatively short roots and long crowns, which are constantly erupting from their “hiding places” within their underlying bones. The circular chewing motion of a horse keeps the surfaces of the teeth that contact one another (occlusal surfaces) worn down. In the natural, continuous grazing setting, horses pick up dirt and small rocks from the ground that help wear down the teeth along with the silicate in the grass. The changes we have implemented to our horses' environment and feeding practices create a need for regular dental “tune-ups.” Over time, horses develop sharp hooks, points, and uneven wear patterns (wave, ramp, hooks, excessively worn teeth, etc.) which can lead to the development of painful ulcers on the gums next to the sharp teeth. Poor dentition can advance to behavioral/performance problems, weight loss, oral infections, and even colic. This validates the importance of routine oral examinations every 6-12 months.



Courtesy Dr. Rowe

Good dental health is important throughout a horse's entire life, however, younger horses ages 2-5 require more frequent dental examinations because deciduous teeth (baby teeth) are softer than adult teeth. As horses' age the teeth continue to erupt and eventually are lost, making the importance of routine dental care more pertinent to maintain the body condition and well-being of the animal. Periodontal disease (gingivitis, infections, etc.) can effect any horse but becomes more of an issue in older horses which makes **at least yearly dental examinations** a must. Horses are living longer thanks to owner awareness and veterinary care so make routine dental care part of your annual wellness plan. Proper dentition is important for the health and longevity of your horse so contact your veterinarian to design a specialized dental care plan for your horse. For more information, visit: www.myhorsematters.com.

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