Gastric Ulcer Formation

A n ulcer is an area of damaged and eroded tissue that leaves behind a painful divot (think of a canker sore or a bed sore). Ulcers in the equine stomach and even the pylorus (the outflow tract of the stomach into the small intestine) are common. The leading causes for gastric ulcers are compromise of the protective stomach lining and repeated exposure of this lining to acid.

A horse’s stomach is unique and specially designed for grazing animals. It is essentially divided into two “halves.” The top half has a skinlike lining (squamous cells), whereas the bottom half has glandular cells that produce hydrochloric acid and mucus (to help protect the stomach lining from the acid). Most ulcer problems will develop in the unprotected nonglandular squamous lining.

A horse’s stomach is quite small and produces hydrochloric acid continually rather than just when food reaches it (as occurs in humans). This design is perfect for perpetual grazers, but not for horses that are fed only a few times a day. Therefore, when a horse ingests insufficient amounts of roughage and/or eats grain meals intermittently, the stomach continues releasing acid, without the buffer of the saliva, irritating the stomach’s mucosal lining and leading to ulcer formation.

62% of horses have stomach ulcers.¹

I’m not the type to cross my fingers.

The simple truth is that every horse is at risk for stomach ulcers. Including yours. It’s time to reduce the risk with ULCERGARD® (omeprazole). It’s the only medicine approved by the FDA to prevent equine stomach ulcers. *

Take action at ulcergard.com.

* When administered for 8 or 28 days, ULCERGARD is proven to effectively prevent stomach ulcers in horses exposed to stressful conditions.

¹ Data on file at Merial. 2008 Merial Scoping Program Results.

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION: ULCERGARD can be used in horses that weigh at least 600 pounds. The effectiveness of ULCERGARD in the prevention of gastric ulcers in foals and weanlings has not been evaluated. Safety in pregnant mares has not been determined.