



Photo: Steve Fisch, DVM, Zasha, & Joe Fisch, DVM

Signs that your horse may have OCD:

Stiffness, lameness and pain in the affected joint are common signs that a horse may have developed osteochondrosis (OCD). Unlike other animals, a horse with osteochondrosis (OCD) does not always experience pain.

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Success Story

BIG AND BEAUTIFUL MAY PREDISPOSE YOUR HORSE FOR OCD

Rhoda Icerman has been a valued client of **AVS Equine Hospital** for more than 15 years. Although we are the only full-service equine referral hospital within 150 miles we greatly value our local family of clients, so when they call with a problem we jump in the truck and head to their farm. This is what happened on November 14, 2007 when Rhoda called to say **Zasha** had a swollen right hock. **Dr. Joe Fisch** went out to examine **Zasha** and found that her temperature, pulse, & respiration were within normal limits and there was a warm, moderate swelling of the right tibiotarsal (upper hock joint). The affected area showed no signs of puncture or trauma. **Zasha** was sound at the trot at the time of the exam. Differential diagnosis at this point included: infection, OCD (osteochondrosis), trauma, and localized swelling from a non infectious agent..

A few days later because the swelling had not resolved with bute, wrapping, and cold hosing, **Zasha** came to **AVS Equine Hospital** for digital radiographs. The radiographs showed two OCD lesions in the right hock. Often OCD's will be bilateral so the left hock was also radiographed and a very small OCD lesion was found.

OCD is a common, painful disease in horses. It is characterized by an abnormality in the cartilage-to-bone transformation. As a result, cartilage and bone fragments may break off into the joint space. OCD is not a form of

arthritis, however, it often leads to arthritis. Rapidly growing larger breeds of horse have a genetic predisposition towards the condition. **Zasha** is a big sweet warmblood, so genetically she was predisposed towards the condition. (The pain from osteochondrosis is similar to the "growing pains" experienced by adolescents.)

Polycygan (a relatively new intra-articular treatment for OCD lesions) was injected into both tibiotarsal joints. Approximately 2 weeks later **Zasha** returned to **AVS Equine Hospital** for arthroscopic surgery. The benefits of arthroscopic surgery include small incision site, less chance of infection, and shorter recovery time.

The surgery was successful on both hocks and **Zasha** was sent home the following day with post surgery instructions. **Zasha** was on stall rest for 3 days, followed by stall rest and hand walking for 27 days. Then small paddock turnout for an additional month. Also, as recommended with most Arthroscopic surgeries, Polyglycan (or hyaluonic acid) was injected into the upper hock joints of both hocks.

Today **Zasha** is still sound and the swelling is gone.

