

got sand?



Oh how we long in the desert for lush green pastures! Unfortunately, for most of us these are not available. Therefore, we aim to bed our horses on a soft, comfortable ground surface that will not blow away. We use sand in stalls, arenas, and turnouts.

Horses love to eat, right? So what do they spend the majority of their day doing once the hay is gone? They forage through the sand looking for every little morsel that may remain and in the meantime they often ingest sand along with it.

This can, over time, present a complex problem: Sand Colic or a Sand Colonopathy.

Clinical Signs of Abdominal Sand:

The clinical signs of abdominal sand may vary

Auscultation (sound) of moving Sand in the ventral abdomen

Sand Sedimentation in the manure

“Poor Doer”: Your horse seems to eat well, though he has a poor body condition, is losing weight across the top line, or a “pot belly” appearance.

Chronic Intermittent Diarrhea

Colic: The severity of sand colics can range from mild belly aches that resolve with routine medical care to more severe obstructions that require surgery. Horses may be chronic intermittently affected or suddenly and catastrophically affected with intestinal rupture leading to death.

I know my Horse has SandNOW WHAT?

Minimize the sand in his environment: It doesn't matter how much sand we get moved out of the horse if he is still ingesting it.

- 1) Consider using some sort of "Dirt" (i.e.: Landscape dirt) in the stalls.
- 2) Allow some compost to build up over the sand. In the desert intestinal parasites are not as big of a problem as ingested sand.....It is OK to let some dry composted manure base build up over the sand in your stalls.
- 3) Feed in a sand clear area: Well swept stall mats or a raised area can be made with railroad ties. Galvanized water troughs also work well to feed out of, instead of hanging mangers.
- 4) Some horses will become compulsive sand eatersthese animals may require muzzling to prevent further ingestion, especially when turned out in sandy arenas.

Keep the Sand Moving Out. What will aid in movement of the sand? **Fiber, Fiber, Fiber!**

- 1) **Psyllium:** Psyllium is a mucoid fiber that will aid in collection and movement of the sand. We recommend 30 days of psyllium administration for all horses that we hear sand in. Then provide a maintenance dose the first 7 days of every month.
- 2) **Hay:** Whenever possible, keep feed in front of the horse. Free feed grass hay to your horse during the day. This works two-fold: 1) provides a consistent fiber source to aid in movement of the sand. 2) Provides something else to ingest instead of SAND! *"A Busy Colon is a Happy Colon!"*

Depending on the severity of Clinical Signs other recommendations may be made for your horse.

- 1) Nasogastric intubation with the administration of laxatives
- 2) Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, such as Banamine
- 3) Probiotic therapy
- 4) In the most severe cases: intensive care hospitalization, IV fluid therapy, and sometimes even surgical intervention.



All of us at Desert Pines Equine are dedicated to Care, Compassion, and Concern for you and your horse. We will "listen" for sand on every wellness exam performed. Please ask your veterinarian if you, too, can listen with a stethoscope if they diagnose your horse with sand.