



Horse Care Info Sheet

Mud Fever

Scratches, greasy heel, dew poisoning, dermatitis – no matter what you call it, it irritates your horse's skin and like any bacterial infection it has potential to do much deeper damage.

Skin which is exposed to wet conditions on a continual basis can result in a breakdown of the protective barrier of epidermis, allowing bacteria to invade which results in infection.

Signs

- Small red ulcerations of the skin can often be spotted at the back of the pastern signaling the beginning of this infection
- Scabbing, oozing of serum
- Loss of hair
- Inflammation

Prevention

- Providing clean dry bedding in the stall and turn out in a well-draining field.
- Turn out in a clean field – free from mud and manure

Treatment

- Keep the legs clean and dry
- Use clean towels to dry the area when the horse comes in from outside. Do not use the same towels on other horses and dry the affected area last to prevent the condition from spreading.
- Carefully clip the hair without opening sores to allow air-flow to the area and help keep it dry.
- If the skin is dry and cracking apply ointments recommended by your vet
- Severe cases may need antibiotics or anti-inflammatories as prescribed by your vet. You will also want to ensure your tetanus shot is up to date.



Removing the underlying cause is of course the easiest way to avoid mud fever but is often easier said than done. Make sure fields at least have a dry sheltered area horses can access.

Learn more about strategies to keep your horses healthy in our short online course [Horse Care & Welfare](#).