

Would a horse that flipped its palate while racing have any issue being a three-day eventer?

In most cases, a racehorse that has had a history of flipping its soft palate still has a very good prognosis as a three-day eventer.

Dorsal displacement of the soft palate (DDSP) is the most common dynamic upper airway abnormality observed in young racehorses.

The etiology of DDSP often is associated to inflammation within the nasopharynx. This results in a local neuritis (inflammation to the nerves within the soft palate and the walls of the nasopharynx) which affects the normal function of the soft palate.

In most cases of DDSP, medical management such as anti-inflammatory agents and throat spray are all that is needed to improve the condition. In some horses, other factors besides pharyngeal inflammation (such as a flaccid and/or small epiglottis) can contribute to horses displacing their soft palates during race training.

In these horses, both medical and surgical management may be required to

help minimize the chances of DDSP. Surgical management is aimed at improving the contact of the epiglottis on the soft palate.

The most common surgical procedures performed are the sternohyoideus myectomy/tenectomy, laser thermoplasty of the soft palate, and the "tie-forward" procedure. In some cases, all three procedures are performed.

In most cases, the author prefers combining the myectomy and the laser thermoplasty. A tie-forward may be performed upon horses that do not improve or have a very small or weak epiglottis.

A horse with a history of DDSP should have an endoscopic examination of the nasopharynx, and a thorough history should be obtained, if possible, on what previously was done to manage the DDSP.

If the horse has a typical epiglottis and the larynx functions normally, the horse should be fine as a three-day eventer.



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