



Spring Skin Worries

Spring is ALMOST here!!! And with it comes beautifully fragrant flowers, longer days, rain and those dreaded skin conditions. No matter how well we care for our equine friends they can develop a multitude of annoying skin conditions.

Scratches or pastern dermatitis (PD) are associated with red irritated skin, with small crusty scabs or mats of hair on the heels, to large painful oozing scabs. These are typically seen just above the heel on the hind limbs. This is often the result from chapping that occurs when we alternate from wet to dry conditions commonly seen in the Spring, allowing the bacteria to enter the dermis and begin the chain of events that will eventually result in infection. To treat the area, gently clip away the hair and bathe the affected area with a medicated shampoo. You will want to avoid repeatedly bathing or bandaging the area, as this will allow more moisture into the dermis (skin). It is very important to keep the affected area as dry as possible. After washing, apply a wound ointment or spray daily until the scabs loosen and fall away. Pastern dermatitis is synonymous with terms like mud fever, dew poisoning, cracked heel, or greasy heel, just to name a few. No matter the name, the symptoms and discomfort are all the same.

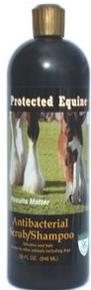
Rain Rot, or Rain Scald, is also caused by the *Dermatophilus* bacteria. Rain Rot simply describes skin conditions caused by *Dermatophilus* on parts of the body other than the lower limb and pastern region. Unfortunately, we are all too familiar with the Rain Rot lesions which appear along the neck and back of a horse, usually following some kind of precipitation in the days prior. Clinical signs vary from small non-painful matted tufts of hair to large exudative crusty like scabs. Treatment includes the use of a medicated shampoo (Chlorhexidine or Betadine), removal of scabs/tufts of affected hair follicles, and drying out of the lesions and hair coat. Some cases may require more aggressive therapy, so it is important to work closely with your veterinarian to treat these cases of Rain Rot (or PD) before they get out of control.

Providing access to shelter, such as a run in shed, can give horses the ability to get in out of the rain if a barn is not available. Care should be taken to avoid situations in which we trap moisture in our horse's skin or hair, like blanketing a horse during a rainstorm. Affected horses are the primary source of infection, so care should be taken to avoid exposure to unaffected individuals. Dispose of scabs from affected animals appropriately, and disinfect tack & grooming supplies as well. To minimize spreading never share grooming supplies between affected and unaffected horses without proper disinfecting.

Below you will find some helpful products for the prevention and treatment of many seasonal skin conditions. Talk to your veterinarian about effective prescription products that are also available that can help with the battle against skin issues. As with any health issue, consult your veterinarian if you have questions or concerns, or if the skin problem persists and does not improve.



[KetoChlor Medicated Shampoo](#) - Treat dermatitis, seborrhea, pyoderma and other skin conditions caused by bacteria and yeast infections with medicated KetoChlor shampoo. This easy-lathering shampoo combines chlorhexidine, which is an antiseptic, and ketoconazole, an antifungal, in one, easy-to-use product. KetoChlor not only cleans and treats infections, but also creates a barrier that protects the skin. – **Size: 16oz - \$24.59**



[Antibacterial Scrub/Shampoo](#) – Protected Equine Antibacterial Scrub is an effective bacterial and fungus germ killer. The deep cleaning scrub is effective on rain rot, scratches and mud rash. This shampoo is formulated to be gentle enough for the most sensitive skin types. – **Size: 32oz - \$13.43**



[Micro-Tek Equine Spray](#) – A fast acting, anti-microbial spray that minimizes fungal and bacterial skin problems on contact. Provides leave-on protection that continues for over 24 hours. Non-toxic and will not burn or hurt open wounds, stops skin problems from spreading, is non-steroidal and environmentally friendly. – **Size: 32oz - \$33.57**



[Shapley's M-T-G Spray](#) - Original M-T-G is recommended for fungus, rain rot, scratches, mud fever, greasy heel, girth itch, dandruff, itchy skin, and tail rubbing. An oil-based product that balances a drying and healing action with moisturizers. Original M-T-G keeps the skin conditioned, creating a barrier against the elements. Original M-T-G offers quick relief and visible hair growth in 3-5 days and is ideal for use on skin where winter blankets have rubbed hair off. The product does not require washing or water for application, making it ideal for cold weather use. Original M-T-G is also excellent as a leave-in conditioner/detangler for promoting mane and tail growth. – **Size: 32oz - \$19.53**



[Dermacloth™](#) - Prepackaged disposable bathing and cleansing product for horses, dogs, livestock and other animals with similar coats. Developed first as an aid in treating certain types of skin problems, including ringworm, rain scald and others. Dermacloth™ has also been used to treat hot spots on dogs and other animals. - **Size: 8 cloths - \$10.54**



[Vetericyn™ VF Wound Spray](#) - Non-irritating and antibiotic-free spray that helps debride, rinse and eliminate odors in wounds and is scientifically designed for a wide variety of wounds, ulcers and abrasions in both companion pets and horses. Vetericyn™ Wound Spray is pH neutral, non-flammable, and does not cause skin or eye irritation. Vetericyn™ is steroid- and antibiotic-free. Because it contains no banned substances, it “tests free” on competitive horses and was reviewed by "The Equine Drugs and Medications Program" and is permitted for use by the United States Equestrian Federation (FEI). - **Size: 16oz - \$28.54**



[Platinum Skin and Allergy](#) - Potent allergy formula that may be helpful in horses with seasonal allergies. Allergies can appear both in the skin as well as the respiratory airways in horses generally from exposure to allergens like mold, spores and insect bites. Platinum Skin and Allergy formula works by helping to maintain a healthy immune system and providing ingredients like Quercetin, a naturally-occurring antioxidant, to maintain healthy histamine levels. This formula may be used in conjunction with Platinum Performance Equine because of the beneficial effects of the Omega-3 fatty acids. - **Size: 1lb - \$149.94**

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References:

Spring Skin Irritations: Pastern Dermatitis, Rain Rot, Ringworm. Dr. Josh Mixon. June 2011
Spotting Spring Problems Early. Dr. Matthew Mackay-Smith. Equisearch.com/Equus Magazine September 2005

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