**CLIENT EDUCATION HANDOUT**

**Customer Name, Street Address, City, State, Zip code**

**Phone number, Alt. phone number, Fax number, e-mail address, web site**

**Multisystemic Eosinophilic Epitheliotropic Disease**

**Basics**

**Overview**

* A chronic, progressive condition causing weight loss and skin disease as a result of infiltration of eosinophils into multiple organs, including the skin, gastrointestinal tract, liver, and lungs

**Signalment**

* Standardbred horses may be predisposed
* Younger horses are typically affected (3–13 years of age)

**Signs**

* Weight loss
* Diarrhea
* Dermatitis—itchy, crusting skin lesions with hair loss over the limbs, coronary bands, and head most commonly, but may occur all over the body
* Horses may have signs due to multiple organ system involvement, typically signs of liver (decreased appetite, yellow discoloration of the mucous membranes) or respiratory disease (coughing, nasal discharge, labored breathing)

**Causes**

* The cause is unknown. Parasites, hypersensitivity reactions, and lymphosarcoma (cancer) have been suggested as possible causes

**Risk Factors**

* None known

**Treatment**

**Appropriate Health Care**

* Medical treatment with oral or intravenous corticosteroids is appropriate. Horses with diarrhea or severe organ system dysfunction may require hospitalization and additional supportive care (intravenous fluid therapy, antibiotics, nutritional support)

**Activity**

* Horses should be rested

**Diet**

* The diet should include high-quality forage and a complete pelleted feed. Additional calories in the form of a fat supplement or oil supplementation may be needed to attempt to prevent additional weight loss. In horses with a decreased appetite, various feedstuffs should be offered to encourage caloric intake

**Surgical Considerations**

* Consider abdominal exploratory surgery to obtain tissue biopsies for diagnosis, determine the extent of disease and intestinal structures affected, and for possible resection of affected intestine

**Medications**

* Corticosteroids or other immunosuppressive medications are used to decrease eosinophilic infiltrate within the intestine and other organ systems
* Antibiotics, anti-inflammatories, antihistamines, and dewormers may also be used to treat secondary infection and decrease the inflammatory response

**Follow-Up**

**Patient Monitoring**

* The horse’s weight should be monitored every 1–2 weeks. Careful monitoring of signs, bloodwork, and ultrasonography and/or X-rays should be performed to determine response to treatment

**Expected Course and Prognosis**

* The disease is associated with a poor prognosis and low survival rate
* Most horses require euthanasia because of poor response to treatment
* A few reported cases have responded well to treatment and survived longer than 8 months after the diagnosis

**Key Points**

* Multisystemic eosinophilic epitheliotropic disease is a progressive, debilitating disease-causing weight loss, skin disease, and multiple organ system dysfunction
* Prognosis is poor, as most horses do not respond well to treatment



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*Blackwell's Five-Minute Veterinary Consult: Equine, Third Edition,* Jean-Pierre Lavoie © 2020 John Wiley & Sons, Inc.