



## What You Need to Know About Equine Joint Injections: A Client information and Consent Form

**WHOLE HORSE**  
Veterinary Services

Denise Bickel DVM

### Why inject My Horse's Joint?

If we have suggested joint injections for your horse, it is because Dr. Bickel feels it is the best treatment option for your horse. Joint injections are used for two reasons: 1) to diagnose a problem or 2) to directly treat a problem. For diagnosis, we put a small amount of local anesthetic in a joint in order to pinpoint the source of pain. In many cases this is the best way to accurately diagnose lameness. For treatment, we can reduce inflammation and improve cartilage health by placing medications directly in the joint where they are most needed. This is often more effective than trying to treat with oral or injectable supplements and medications.

### Is It Safe?

We all want to protect the welfare of your horse. It is important to understand that while joint injections are very safe, there is a small possibility of complications, and these complications can be serious. The two major complications are infection (when bacteria inadvertently enter a joint) and "flare" (when a horse has an allergic-type reaction to the substances injected into the joint. If infection occurs, fest and aggressive treatment is required, often needing the horse being taking to a surgical hospital. Flare requires emergency first aid treatment that can be done at the farm. These complications are rare, but they do happen. Statistics would suggest that they occur in 1 in 300 to 1 in 400 horses injected. Every possible precaution will be taken to prevent the occurrence of any complications. Again these complications are rare, in general, the benefits gained in terms of pain relief and improved performance for the horse are worth the risk for owners.

### What Alternatives Exist?

Injectable joint products such as Adequan and Legend can be used to treat some types of arthritic conditions. Non-Invasive Shockwave therapy can both treat and provide pain relief for some orthopedic conditions. If you are uncomfortable with doing joint injections, we can try to develop an alternative treatment plan. However, for many conditions, joint injections are the preferred treatment.

### What follow up care is needed?

Most horses will need 2 days off work following injection. In cases of foot or ankle injections, bandages or stall rest may be needed to protect the injection site. It is important to monitor the horse following injection for any swelling or lameness, which can be signs of a problem. In general more than 99.5% of horses will return to work within 3 days of injection. If you see anything described here or that is concerning, contact us immediately at (517)474-4050.

By signing below I agree that I have been told, have read, and understand the risks with *joint* injection for my horse and accept my responsibility in the decision process and will make sure my horse is monitored for post-injection symptoms.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_