



**My horse has
This ugly growth
On his penis.
It just appeared this
Summer.
What is it?**

Although there are a few possibilities for what this growth could be, it looks very much like **Habronemiasis**.

Habronema are a parasite of horses. Normally the worms reproduce in the stomach of the horse and shed eggs into the manure, causing little problem for the horse.

However, sometimes, flies will get the Habronema eggs on them while laying their own eggs in the manure. They then can deposit these eggs around the eyes, sheath and other areas of the horse's body while feeding on body secretions. The eggs hatch and Habronema larvae migrate into the skin in these areas, causing inflammation, pus, itching and large sores. For this reason, Habronemiasis is sometimes called "Summer Sores".

Because other problems such as Squamous cell Carcinomas, sarcoids (both skin tumors) and other infections can appear similar to Habronema, it is best to diagnose the condition with a biopsy (a small piece of skin surgically removed and sent to a laboratory for examination). The Habronema larvae are easily seen on biopsy.

Habronema is usually easily treated with ivermectin dewormer and fly control. Sometimes very large growths will require surgical removal. There is a possibility of yearly reoccurrence in susceptible horses, so vigilance is required to prevent relapse. Any unusual skin growths should be examined by your veterinarian.