

# August 2025 Newsletter

## Urticaria and Ringworm



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### What is Urticaria?

Urticaria, or "hives", is a common skin condition in horses, characterised by raised, soft swellings (wheals) on the skin. These bumps can range from small and subtle to large and widespread, and they often appear suddenly.

### Causes of Urticaria in Horses

Urticaria is usually the result of an **allergic reaction**. Common triggers include:

- **Insect bites/stings** (especially midges, flies, mosquitoes)
- **Environmental allergens** (pollens, moulds, dust mites)
- **Feed ingredients** (soy, beet pulp, additives)
- **Topical products** (shampoos, sprays, fly repellents)
- **Medications or vaccines**

In many cases, the **exact cause is never identified**, especially if it's a one-off episode.

### When to Investigate Further

If urticaria becomes **chronic or recurrent**, a more detailed workup may be needed to:

- Rule out underlying disease (e.g. autoimmune, parasitic)
- Identify environmental or feed allergens
- Assess for stress-related flare-ups

### Clinical Signs

- Sudden appearance of raised, round or irregular swellings
- Localised or generalised over the body
- Usually non-painful, but can be itchy
- Often resolve within hours to days
- Chronic cases may wax and wane over weeks

### Diagnosis & Treatment

Most cases are diagnosed based on clinical appearance and history. A few key points:

- ✓ **Mild or one-off cases** may not require treatment.
- ✓ **Corticosteroids** can help reduce inflammation in moderate to severe cases.
- ✓ **Cool hosing and fly control** can support comfort.
- ✓ **Identify and eliminate triggers**, if possible (e.g. diet trial, stable management, new sprays).
- ✂ Blood allergy testing and intradermal skin testing may be considered for persistent or recurrent cases.

### Top Tips for Owners

- ✓ Keep a diary of outbreaks – timing, location, feed changes, weather, flies, etc.
- ✓ Review recent product use (shampoos, sprays).
- ✓ Consider a hypoallergenic diet trial if hives

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## Ringworm

Ringworm is one of the most common skin infections we see in horses — especially in yards with shared equipment or new arrivals. Despite the name, it's not caused by a worm at all but by a group of fungi that affect the skin and hair.

### What is Ringworm?

Ringworm (dermatophytosis) is a fungal skin infection caused by organisms like *Trichophyton* or *Microsporum*. It's highly contagious and can spread through:

- Direct horse-to-horse contact
- Shared grooming kits, tack, rugs, or stable surfaces
- People's hands and clothing
- Contaminated fences or walls

It thrives in warm, damp conditions and is more common in young horses or when horses are stressed, clipped, or immunocompromised.

### Zoonotic Risk: Can Humans Catch It?

Yes. Ringworm is **zoonotic**, meaning it can spread to people. Be cautious when handling infected horses:

- Wear gloves when treating
- Wash hands thoroughly
- Disinfect clothing and tack
- Avoid contact with other horses after handling an infected one

### Prevention Tips

- Quarantine new arrivals for at least 2 weeks
- Avoid sharing grooming kits or rugs
- Disinfect clippers and tack regularly
- Monitor for early signs in groups of young or stressed horses
- Contact us early – prompt treatment limits spread!



### What Does It Look Like?

- Small, round patches of hair loss
- Crusty or scaly skin underneath
- Lesions usually appear on the face, girth, shoulders, or neck
- May spread across the body if untreated
- Generally, not itchy, but secondary infections can cause irritation

Diagnosis is usually based on appearance but can be confirmed with skin scrapings, fungal culture, or PCR.

### Treatment & Management

Ringworm is self-limiting (will often resolve in 1–3 months), but treatment is important to speed recovery and reduce spread.

- ☒ Topical antifungal shampoos or washes (e.g. enilconazole)
- ☒ Clip and clean affected areas (dispose of or disinfect clippers)
- ☒ Isolate affected horses if possible
- ☒ Disinfect tack, rugs, grooming kits, and stables with antifungal products

### Client Meetings in September

- 10<sup>th</sup> Pre Purchase Exam at Curland Equestrian
- 24<sup>th</sup> Behaviour at Drakes Farm
- Please ring for further information 01297304007

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