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Treatment for viral cause of liver disease involves aggressive supportive care with IV fluids, corticosteroids, B vitamins and dietary modification. Antiviral drugs are possible but here-to-fore have not been considered a silver bullet.

Liver disease can be a cause of poor performance in the racehorse, but one must be cautious and thorough in the assessment of AST and GGTP numbers as they relate to liver disease. Since AST can be elevated with muscle damage and GGTP can be elevated in over-trained horse with oxidative stress to liver tissue, additional complete physical exam and complementary laboratory testing are needed to identify the exact cause of poor performance in the racehorse.

Discuss all aspects of liver disease and the implications of viral liver disease in the management of horses with suspected liver damage with your veterinarian. Be sure your understanding of the laboratory data truly reflects and differentiates a disease process from a training program or management program process.

**-Submitted by: Dr. Paul F. Hanebutt, Jr., DVM, [www.BrenfordAnimalHospital.com](http://www.BrenfordAnimalHospital.com)**

- References:
- 1) Experimental Transmission of Equine Hepacivirus in Horses as a Model for Hepatitis C Virus, Joshua D. Ramsey et al, Hepatology, Journal of the American Association for the Study of Liver Disease, May 2015.
  - 2) Joy Tomlinson DVM, DACIM, Equine Hepatitis Viruses, AAEP Proceedings 2021, Vol 67, Pg 296.
  - 3) Thomas J. Divers, DVM, DACVIM, DACVECC, How to Use Serum Chemistries in the Evaluation of Poor Performance Thoroughbreds and Standardbred Racehorses, AAEP Proceedings 2021, Vol 67, Pg 219.