



EOTRH

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Equine Odontoclastic Tooth Resorption and Hypercementosis, also known as EOTRH (sounds like "orth"), is a degenerative disease of the incisors and sometimes canines in older horses. It is usually gradual in onset, though often isn't diagnosed until quite extensive lesions are present. Most commonly it is a condition of older horses (18+) years.



Swollen roots



Swollen "bulbous" incisor roots

While this syndrome has probably existed for many years, it has only been properly identified in the last 10- 15 yrs. Diagnosis is typically made through physical exam, age of horse, and radiographs of the incisors. Radiographs are the only way to know definitively how many teeth are affected and how severe the lesions are. At this time, the underlying cause of this disease is unknown; therefore, there is no known treatment to help prevent this syndrome. The treatment for affected teeth is extraction based on staging of lesions present radiographically. As the disease progresses, the roots of the incisors (and sometimes canines) start to resorb.

This is an inflammatory process. Some horses also develop hypercementosis which is an excessive buildup of cementum (calcified tissue) on the roots of one or more teeth. This appears as enlarged (bulbous) roots on x-rays and swollen gums where the roots are on exam. Unfortunately, as the disease progresses affected teeth eventually start to loosen and become painful. As further resorption occurs, some horses may even fracture off weakened teeth. Many of these teeth become infected as well, as the roots continue to degrade. This can sometimes present with small red "dots" visible above the gum line of the incisors, or even small pimple-like draining tracts in this same area.

Many older horses are fairly stoic, and don't always exhibit obvious outward signs of oral pain until the clinical disease is quite progressed. As severe changes occur, these horses can start to lose weight, eat slowly, and/or chew abnormally. Some horses will start to refuse biting down on treats



or carrots, and some will quit grazing due to pain in their incisors. As the disease becomes advanced, some horses may exhibit irritable behaviors when being bridled or ridden.

The decision of which teeth and how many to extract is determined by the radiographs and examination. If only a few are extracted, I recommend annual exam and radiographs to monitor the remaining teeth. Many horses bounce back quickly after extractions of the affected teeth, even those that end up having all of their incisors extracted at once.

What should you expect if your horse has EOTRH and needs extractions? First, I prefer to do the extractions at the clinic in stocks. We usually have the owner drop off the horse in the morning and pick them up later that day or the next day. Your horse will be properly sedated, given antibiotics, receive pain medication, and have nerve blocks performed so they will not feel pain during the extractions. After the extractions, they will be sore and will be sent home on pain medication and antibiotics. I recommend soft feed for the first couple weeks if all of the teeth are extracted. If all the teeth are extracted, it can take several weeks for the gums to heal. No biting is recommended during this time.

As for eating, patients who have had their teeth extracted do very well and learn to eat pasture using their lips (like cows, sheep and goat who don't have upper incisors). Horses' chew with the molars and premolars, so incisor extraction does not affect their ability to chew up their food. Many horses become much more bright, happy, and personable after the extractions.



Bulbous, lytic tooth



Hypercementosis of roots

