



### Previous VET NOTES

- July 2011 - Furosemide and exercise-induced pulmonary hemorrhage (EIPH)
- June 2011 - Eastern Equine Encephalitis—have you vaccinated?
- May 2011 - Under tack dynamic respiratory scope
- December 2010 - Equine Piroplasmiasis
- October 2010 - Sand colic
- September 2010 - Vaccines
- July 2010 - Rhodococcus in foals
- June 2010 - Wound Management
- March 2010 - Pharmacy Notes
- February 2010 - Cryptosporidiosis in the horse
- December 2009 - Selection of mares for embryo transfer
- October 2009 - Tying-up Syndrome
- September 2009 - Flexural deformities in the forelimbs of foals
- August 2009 - Equine Cushing's Disease
- July 2009 - Corneal ulcers
- June 2009 - Laparoscopic surgery: A new way to look at things
- May 2009 - Equine cardiology

### The pre-purchase exam

Once you have found, and plan to buy, the horse or pony of your dreams, before you sign the contract you should protect yourself by having a pre-purchase examination performed. The exam does not give us a crystal ball look into the future and it is certainly no guarantee that this horse will be able to achieve all of your expectations, but it can give insights to help ensure you are making an informed decision before money changes hands.

The purpose of a pre-purchase exam is to help provide the buyer with enough information to enable him/her to make an informed decision as to whether the horse will meet his/her needs. General health, conformation, and soundness for intended use are all assessed. There is no “perfect” horse. All of them have issues or imperfections. The pre-purchase tries to identify these. Then the buyer can decide if they can deal with those issues.

The pre-purchase should not be looked at as a pass/fail test or a guarantee of long-term health and soundness. It is only a snapshot in time. We as veterinarians do the best we can to evaluate that horse on a given day. Things do change however.

The pre-purchase exam in general will include three phases:

Basic health evaluation: health history, temperature, pulse, respiration, general condition and conformation.

Lameness assessment: flexion of the joints, soft tissue palpation, and move-

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ment evaluation.

Other diagnostics: X-rays, ultrasound, MRI, or blood work. These may or may not come into play depending on intended use and budget.

The prepurchase exam I perform starts at the head. The teeth and eyes are all evaluated. I then move toward the rear of the horse and evaluate the heart, lungs, neck/back soreness, intestinal motility and finally temperature. The legs are palpated and hoof testers applied to all four hooves. Flexion tests are next followed by a movement evaluation on a lunge line. Some veterinarians may ask to see the horse ridden. In my experience I have seen good riders make horses look better than they are, and bad riders make them look worse than they are. So I very rarely ask to see the horse ridden.

Most of my pre-purchase exams include x-rays. These would be carried out at the end of the pre-purchase along with any other diagnostics the buyer requests. I feel x-rays are very valuable even if the horse has had no issues in the pre-purchase exam. If nothing else they give you a baseline of the horse's radiographic changes that can allow better assessment in the future.

Finally, when a pre-purchase is done, whether it is very basic or in-depth, it is the buyer's responsibility to listen with an open mind to the findings of the veterinarian. Don't use a pre-purchase exam as the "tie-breaker" between the purchase of two horses – this could just make it more confusing. Prepare in advance so you know what to expect and what you can deal with as a horse owner – and have an open and honest line of communication with your veterinarian. These two factors put you, the buyer, and the veterinarian on the same page, facilitate an educated buying decision, and ensure that this is the horse for you.

- April 2009 - Single screw compression update
- March 2009 - Resistance to anti-parasitic drugs
- November 2008 - Periodontal Disease
- October 2008 - Interstitial pneumonia - a different kind of lung disease
- September 2008 - The yearling sales
- August 2008 - Eastern Equine Encephalitis—have you vaccinated
- July 2008 - Castration complications
- June 2008 - The use of acupuncture as a diagnostic aid in the equine lameness exam
- April 2008 - Current parasite control recommendations

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[www.petersonsmith.com](http://www.petersonsmith.com)



4747 SW 60th Avenue  
Ocala, FL 34474

Phone: (352) 237-6151  
Fax: (352) 237-0629  
Email: [PSEH@petersonsmith.com](mailto:PSEH@petersonsmith.com)

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