

# Equine Respiratory Disease: What are we calling it now?



IAD=inflammatory airway disease  
“mild to moderate asthma”

RAO=recurrent airway obstruction  
“severe asthma”  
Also known as heaves

	IAD	RAO
Age of Onset	Usually young to middle age, but can be seen at any age	Usually > 7 years of age
Common clinical signs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>* <b>Poor performance</b></li><li>* Occasional cough</li><li>* No increased respiratory efforts at rest!</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>* Exercise intolerance</li><li>* Regular to frequent coughing</li><li>* Increased respiratory efforts at rest!</li></ul>

## REMEMBER!

All horses exhibiting respiratory signs should be seen by a vet to rule out the possibility of other, potentially more serious, respiratory conditions:

1. Bronchopneumonia/Pleuropneumonia
2. Viral infections
3. Lungworm Infection
4. Exercise Induced Pulmonary Hemorrhage



# How do we treat equine asthma?

## MEDICAL MANAGEMENT

“reduce lower airway inflammation”

### 1. Corticosteroids

Systemic

intravenous

intramuscular

oral

Inhaled

Examples include dexamethasone,  
prednisolone, triamcinolone,  
fluticasone

### 2. Bronchodilators

Inhaled

Oral

Examples include albuterol,  
clenbuterol

\*Inhaled medications require the use of a  
specialized delivery device (equine inhaler)

## ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

“decrease inhalation of dust & molds”

### 1. Feed soaked hay

\*Soak hay for at least 20 minutes, but be  
careful of leaching nutrients if hay is soaked  
for too long

\*Consider steaming hay

### 2. Discourage round bale usage

### 3. Remove hay from diet

\*Feed complete pelleted feed or soaked hay  
cubes/pellets

### 4. Well ventilated and clean housing

### 5. Good quality bedding

\*Avoid sawdust and straw bedding

### 6. Remove horse from stall during cleaning

### 7. Consider keeping the horse outside 24/7

\*Unless pasture allergens trigger asthma  
symptoms



## REMEMBER!

### A word on supplements...

Few supplements on the market have  
been evaluated in well controlled  
scientific studies.

Aleira is one supplement that has  
been evaluated in a clinical trial.

Environmental management is a key and  
critical factor in controlling equine asthma. If  
strict environmental management is not  
instituted, medical management may not  
control all symptoms of equine asthma.