

Reprinted from *John Lyons*
PERFECT HORSE™  November 2002...

Spray-On Wound Protection

*Horses sometimes seem more injury-prone than active toddlers.
 So keeping a wound spray on hand makes good sense.
 But "the best choice" takes a little thought.*



NANCY KERNS PHOTO

If you've been around enough ol' timers, you've probably heard one say "It's a long way from his heart," even when looking at a particularly nasty wound. There's no doubt that many horses will manage to eventually heal even serious wounds on their own. There's also no doubt that unattended wounds heal much slower, with more scarring, and carry a higher risk of infection, even a life-threatening infection. That doesn't mean every little scratch or drop of blood needs your vet, though.

Situations where you should call your vet, for wound care or at least a tetanus booster, are:

If you have horses, sooner or later, you will have little wounds to deal with. Not every wound is preventable, but those that have to do with fencing or proximity to other horses may be.

- Deep puncture wound.
- Wound where the full thickness of skin has been cut and muscle or fascia (looks like a white sheet at the base of the wound) is exposed.
- Wound with a flap of skin hanging loose.
- Wounds heavily contaminated by dirt, twigs, gravel, etc., that does not rinse off easily (you have to get this out of the wound or it won't heal).
- Wound that starts draining large amounts of obvious pus or has stopped healing.

Beyond those situations, we're often confronted with a variety of scrapes and minor wounds. Last month, we looked at wound-care creams, preferring creams whose main effect was to protect and moisturize the healing skin where superficial wounds were involved. Drying and cracking are usually the major barriers to quick healing in superficial wounds.

Sprays are ideal for wounds that go beyond just the superficial layer, whether sutured or unsutured. They allow you to cover the treatment area evenly and without touching either the wound or the medication you are using. With wounds that are deep enough to cause bleeding, or even to expose

muscle and other deeper tissues, infection becomes a bigger concern. Tissues need to be protected but not covered so heavily that drainage cannot occur. And you want to encourage a healthy environment for healing of both the deeper tissues and the skin.

Many sprays also help protect the wound from further contamination after you have cleaned it, but don't "goop" it up so heavily that fluids cannot drain. If they condition the

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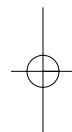
SPRAYING WOUNDS

- Clean the wound first, and assess if it's a superficial scrape or one that needs vet attention.
- Trim hair away from the wound site, to help prevent it from contamination.
- Pat the wound dry with a clean paper towel, unless that would disturb healing.
- Spray the wound. We prefer a product that does not contain alcohol.



WOUND SPRAY REVIEW

Product/ Contact	Price	Active Ingredients	Description	Comments
AluShield Neogen 859-254-1221 www.neogen.com	\$10.00	Aluminum	2.6 oz. aerosol can with snap lid. Silvery spray, very quick drying.	Forms an effective barrier over open wounds. Rapid tissue drying eliminates problems with fly irritation. Potential for irritation in sensitized individuals. Potential for high absorption of aluminum (a toxic mineral). Potential for slower wound healing, but this must be weighed against the benefits of protecting the wound.
Bactine (human product) Bayer Corporation 800-800-4793 www.bayer.com	\$2.99	Benzalkonium chloride, lidocaine 2.5%	Clear liquid in a 2 oz. squeeze bottle.	Very good antiseptic, and the lidocaine is a local anesthetic so it eases pain. Good for scrapes severe enough to bleed but not so deep that skin is gaping or the muscle exposed. Great choice for the sensitive horse who doesn't want you messing around with his wound.
Cut-Heal Aerosol Wound Spray Cut-Heal Animal Care Products 800-CUT-HEAL www.cut-heal.com	\$15.75/ 16 oz. pump, \$9.75 4 oz. aerosol	Crude fish oil, raw linseed oil, spirits of turpentine, balsam of Fir, sulfuric acid	4 oz. metal spray can or 16 oz. heavy plastic pump spray bottle. Oily, yellowish-golden spray w/ strong turpentine odor.	Use with caution on sensitive-skinned horses, around face/eyes/mucus membranes or in thin-skinned areas. Use in well ventilated area and wash hands after use. Rough on tissues compared to most products, but does help in removal of unhealthy tissues/infection and also repels flies. Would not use on uncomplicated wounds that are healing well with gentler products. Discontinue use if any signs of irritation. Warning: Highly flammable.
Equine Relief Equine Elite 877-738-2873 www.equineelite.com	\$7.25	Benzalkonium chloride	8 oz. clear plastic bottle with spray top and snap-on lid. Pale blue liquid. Light medicinal odor.	Foams slightly on shaking. Very gentle. Very good for control/prevention of minor surface infections so that tissues can heal. Must remove all dead tissue and secretions so that product gets to skin level
Furall Spray Farnam 800-234-2269 www.farnamhorse.com	\$7.50	Furazolidone 4%	7 oz. aerosolized spray. Yellow spray, dries quickly, no odor.	Aerosolized spray of the antibiotic furazolidone. Fairly effective antimicrobial but with potential for wound irritation and delayed healing. (Caution: Furazolidone is a known human carcinogen.)
Mane N' Tail Protect Wound Spray Straight Arrow 800-827-9815/610-882-9606 www.manentail.com	\$12.99- \$14.99	Benzalkonium chloride	White plastic, 16 oz. Spray bottle. Clear, nearly odorless, thin spray	Another very gentle but effective surface disinfectant. Must actually reach the tissues to work, so be sure dead tissue and secretions are gently removed before spraying.
Pete's Equine Remedy Frog Works 303-973-0109 www.ffrogworks.com	\$13.95	Apricot and other essential oils, vitamins C and E	12.5 oz, tinted plastic spray bottle, adjustable spray. Clear, thin liquid w/ faint, pleasant odor.	Must shake well frequently to keep oils from separating out. Best used for minor skin irritations/infections that are itchy.
Phenol Aloe Wound Cleanser and Phenol Aloe Wound Treatment Aloe Advantage 877-624-9693/479-846-1607 www.aloeadvantage.com	\$7.99 and \$12.79	Aloe vera, phenol, allantoin	16 oz. plastic bottles with sprayers. Obvious medicinal phenol odor.	Two-step system. You spray on the phenol aloe cleanser generously to cleanse/rinse the wound. You cover the area after cleansing with the Treatment (a gel-like liquid), and leave it on. Potent antibacterial in the phenol. Best used for wounds with infection/drainage problems. Helps repel flies.
Quick+Heal American North Laboratories 909-544-1007 www.americannorthlabs.com	\$12.99 (also available in a 16 oz. pistol spray for \$16.99)	Ichthammol, sodium sulfite, sodium carbonate, sodium bicarbonate, sodium chloride	8 oz. heavy plastic bottle with pump spray top and snap-on lid. Light tan liquid. No odor.	Extremely gentle but effective in encouraging healing of surface wounds or skin irritations with an infectious component. Must remove all dead tissue and secretions so that product gets to skin level.



WOUND SPRAY REVIEW (CONTINUED)

Product/ Contact	Price	Active Ingredients	Description	Comments
Schreiner's Herbal Solution Restoration Products Co. 800-223-4325	\$13.00	Aloe vera, myrrh, goldenseal, comfrey, cayenne and elder, alcohol base.	8.5 oz. trigger spray plastic bottle. Thin, brown liquid with obvious herbal fragrance, predominantly myrrh.	A blend of astringent, disinfecting and healing ingredients. May foam slightly on application. Initial "sting" on broken skin, followed by mild anesthesia. Controls minor infections well, and herbal ingredients appear to counteract any drying potential of the alcohol. Well tolerated by most, but potential for irritant effect in sensitive horses.
Tea Tree ADE Veterinary Skin Care Spray Animal Legends 800-399-7387 www.animallegends.com	\$9.95	Isopropyl, Tea Tree Oil, Collagen Amino Acid, Lanolin, Vit. A, Vit. D, Vit. E.	4 oz. heavy white plastic pump spray with clear plastic lid. Thin, clear spray with the distinctive tea tree odor.	Effective antimicrobial spray with some tissue conditioning effects, but possibility of individual sensitivities to the tea tree oil and some stinging from the alcohol.
Veterinus Derma-Gel Spray Maximilian Zenho & Co 800-838-7524 www.derma-gel.com	\$14.95	Centella asiatica, calendula officinalis, pyrus sorbus, sodium bicarbonate, marjoram, lavender, thyme, sage	1.7 oz. heavy plastic bottle with spray top and snap on lid. (Great size for saddle bag or first-aid kit.) Light, golden spray with faint herbal odor.	Very soothing to wounds. Inhibits both infection and excess granulation and encourages rapid healing and skin regrowth. Appropriate for all except very heavily infected wounds. Adheres well. Only available through vets.
Wound Kote Farnam 800-234-2269 www.farnamhorse.com	About \$7.00	Methyl violet, acriflavine, Furfural, sodium propionate, urea, 30% alcohol	5 oz. aerosol spray can. Odorless.	Very effective surface disinfectant that also rapidly dries wounds, discourages fly irritation. Good choice for open wounds that continue to drain and/or are heavily irritated by flies, but will slow healing compared to other products. Quick drying.
Zn7 Addison Biological Lab. 800-331-2530/660-248-2215 www.addisonlabs.com	\$22	Zinc gluconate and amino acids L-lysine and Taurine.	4 oz. soft plastic bottle with spray top and snap on cover. Very thick (glycerin in the base), clear liquid.	Non-irritating. Some softening effects from the glycerin. Helps create a healthy, natural barrier to drying and infection so wounds can heal. Adheres well to wound. Only available through vets.

skin, ease pain and help fight infection, so much the better. But you need to be especially careful in your use of sprays that contain ingredients that can be directly irritating or drying, such as alcohol, heavy concentrations of essential oils/herbals with an irritant potential, even low concentrations of some oils/herbals in horses that are sensitive to them.

OUR PICKS

For routine care of suture lines and wounds that do not involve a lot of exposed tissue, any of the disinfectant products will



give you added protection against infection, which can slow healing. However, we especially liked Quick+Heal. It is gentle to the tissues, works well on signs of minor infection and also has a nice tissue-conditioning effect, keeping the wound pliable.

Although it's pricey, we couldn't top the combination of pain relief, tissue protection, control of granulation tissue and rapid healing produced by Derma-Gel, though it's only available through vets. The only thing that might be too much for this product to handle would be a serious infection.

The Phenol Aloe Wound Cleanser and Treatment System might be just the thing to try if you are running into problems trying to treat an obviously infected wound. The phenol aloe cleanser helps dead tissue and secretions. If this doesn't solve the problem, you definitely need your vet's help. The Phenol Aloe Wound Treatment produces a good barrier on the wound, as does the Derma-Gel, and the aloe and allantoin protect the tissues from any irritation from the phenol. The phenol even has some pain-controlling effects. It comes in second, though, to Derma-Gel on encouraging very rapid healing and controlling granulation tissue. **PH**