



## Woodside & Woodside North Equine Clinic Equine Health Times

### Quick Links

[WEC Website](#)

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## The Equine Ophthalmic Exam: What do we see in there?

*Meg Hammond, DVM*

### Australian Stringhalt

Flatweed, a type of plant that looks similar to a dandelion, has been found growing in pastures in Virginia. This plant can cause a type of stringhalt in horses called "Australian Stringhalt". Please keep a look out for this plant in your pastures, and be sure your horses aren't eating it!



Do you ever wonder what exactly your veterinarian is looking at during an ocular exam? While the exam may only take a few minutes, it is more complex than you might think! This summary is designed to break down the ophthalmic exam and take away a little of the mystery...



### What have our Doctors been up to?

Dr. Kara Brown, one of our two new interns, attended Haverhill Farm and Bellemount Stable's summer horse camps to give a lecture on the topic of digestion and feeding in the horse.

Dr. Meg Hammond attended AAEP's Focus on the Sport Horse and Focus on the Student in late July in Louisville, KY.

Read about the lives of our veterinary interns in their blog

#### Diaries of a Veterinary Intern

by:  
Dr. Megan Mathias  
and  
Dr. Kara Brown

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## VISION:

While your horse cannot interpret a vision chart, there are specific tests designed to evaluate whether or not an eye is visual.

A quick test of vision, called the **menace response**, is evaluated by making a rapid motion toward the eye, which should result in a blink. Evaluation of retinal function can be examined by shining a bright light directly into the eye which should cause a squint or "**dazzle**" response and should also cause constriction of the pupil, known as the **pupillary light reflex**. If a light is shown in only one eye, the other pupil should constrict at the same time without any direct stimulation! This is the **consensual pupillary light reflex**.

## COMFORT:

Recognizing subtle signs of discomfort early may help to prevent a mild ophthalmic issue from becoming serious.

The upper eyelashes should be perpendicular to the surface of the eye and should be pointing the same direction. Often a subtle, initial sign of discomfort in an eye is upper eyelashes that point slightly downward compared to the normal eye! More obvious signs of pain or inflammation include **squinting, tearing, swelling, or constriction of the pupil** compared to the opposite eye.

## THE PEN LIGHT EXAM:

Multiple structures can be examined with a penlight. The bony **orbit**, or the bone surrounding the eye, is examined for symmetry and congruity. The **upper eyelid**, the **lower eyelid**, the **third eyelid**, and the **conjunctiva** are all evaluated for general integrity, for evidence of trauma, for tumors or growths, and for aberrant lashes or foreign bodies which may rub or irritate the eye. The **pupils** are evaluated for symmetry and their ability to constrict and dilate. The **iris** and **corpora nigra** are evaluated for color changes and growths. The nasolacrimal duct is a thin tube that extends from the corner

of the eye to a small opening at the base of the nostril. This may be examined for patency, as occasionally these may become obstructed.

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#### THE OPHTHALMOSCOPE EXAM:

The ophthalmoscope allows your veterinarian to view each structure of the eye in higher focus and magnification. During this portion of the exam, the **cornea** is carefully evaluated for color, clarity, foreign bodies, masses, new vessel growth, or defects in integrity. The **aqueous humor** (the fluid within the globe) is evaluated for cloudiness and abnormal accumulation of cells such as white or red blood cells. The **lens** is assessed for proper placement and for opacities, such as potential cataracts. Finally, the back of the eye is visualized to evaluate the **retina**, the **optic nerve**, and the associated **vessels**.

#### ADDITIONAL DIAGNOSTIC TESTS:

There are several additional tests that may be performed to provide additional diagnostic information. **Fluorescein stain** is a green dye that is applied to the eye to detect the presence of corneal defects or corneal ulcers. **Rose Bengal** stain is a pink dye that can be applied to the eye to identify the tear film integrity. This stain can help to identify certain types of fungal infections or keratitis. To help identify the presence and type of bacteria, fungal elements, or abnormal cells, samples may be taken from the cornea for **culture and sensitivity** and for **cytology** (examination under a microscope). Occasionally, a veterinarian or ophthalmologist will measure the **intraocular** pressures with a Tonopen. This can help to identify the presence of glaucoma. **Ultrasonography** can also be used to evaluate the globe, the lens position, and the integrity of the retina.

*If you are concerned that your horse or pony may be experiencing an ophthalmic issue, please contact **Woodside Equine Clinic at (804) 798-3281** or **Woodside North Equine Clinic at (540) 423-3100** to schedule an*

## Blog: Diaries of a Veterinary Intern

### Introducing Woodside's New Veterinary Interns!

By: Dr. Megan Mathias and Dr. Kara Brown



#### Dr. Megan Mathias

Hi WEC and WNEC clients and friends! My name is Megan Mathias and I am one of the new interns at Woodside Equine Clinic. I grew up in a beautiful small town in the eastern panhandle of West Virginia. I always had an interest and love for horses and learned to ride at the age of 10 when I got my first pony, Honey (an excellent teacher, as ponies tend to be). Shortly after, we bought my dream horse, a little Arabian filly named Phancy. My mom and I spent most of our summer evenings trail riding our horses in the woods behind our house, and travelling to local and 4h horse shows, horse camps, and competitive trail rides. I was also highly involved with interscholastic sports through high school including basketball, softball, and tennis which took up the remainder of my free time!...

## Dr. Kara Brown

My name is Kara Brown and I am one of the two new Interns at Woodside Equine Clinic for the 2014-2015 Intern year! I was born in Southern California but spent most of my childhood in a small town near Mt Rainier in Washington State. When I was about 9 years old I fell in love with horses and horseback riding after starting my first English riding lessons on a big appaloosa named "Cutie". It was about that time that I also decided I wanted to be a veterinarian, and even wrote in a project my third grade year, that my life goal was to be a "veterinary scintist" (please excuse my third grade spelling...) I continued riding horses and competed in Hunter/Jumpers with my pony until high school, when I decided to begin playing scholastic and club volleyball full time...

...To read more about Dr. Mathias and Dr. Brown, check out their blog, [\*Diaries of a Veterinary Intern.\*](#)

Our practice devotes its charitable giving efforts to the AAEP foundation. The foundation is committed to supporting education, research and benevolent efforts for horses and their caretakers. If you'd like more information or to donate to the Foundation you can visit the website at [AAEP Foundation.](#)



Sincerely,

Woodside & Woodside North Equine Clinic