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# ULCERS:

*a personal journal*  
by Diana Wannamaker



Photo courtesy of www.sxc.hu

This is an excerpt from a personal journal of my gelding, Jay, and the stages we went through, from beginning to current status, with his equine ulcers. As I was writing, feelings surfaced when I saw everything that Jay endured, the lack of education I had about ulcers, the doubt, guilt, etc. But I know in my heart that Jay was brought into my life to teach me. If I know nothing else, I know what lies in my heart, the connection I have with Jay, and the lengths I will go to for his health and happiness. Here is our story...

**HISTORY & PRESENTATION** (prior to Jay and I finding each other)  
Jay – Thoroughbred gelding, flea bitten grey. 16 hands, 11 years old. Off the track (4 years on track, 2 owners), twice a rescue horse. Rescue horse when I found him.

Found on overgrazed pasture. Underfed – small amounts of starchy grain and minimal hay. Vaccinated yearly. Chemical worming or no worming.

Middle of hierarchal status within the herd. Teeth not floated for an estimated 6-10 years. Severe parrot mouth (under bite). Experienced mild colics and separation anxiety. Very quiet, mild mannered disposition. Curious. Very Sensitive. Humorous.

## JOURNAL LOG:

### *End of 2008 to Beginning of 2009*

Jay's first symptoms began while eating in a stall. What seemed, at the time, to be food aggressive behavior – side bumping, kicking and circling stall, and kicking at his stomach with ears back. Behavior was absent when on pasture or eating hay. Each time a behavior was presented, it seemed to point towards some other cause. Boarding in barns with unnatural practices was an additional challenge. Moves to different barns were necessary. Pastured on an empty lot, fed alfalfa hay twice a day. He lived with compatible pasture mate.

### **JOURNAL LOG: February to December 2009**

The behaviors increased. Kicking in the trailer started. He was taking longer to eat, walking away from his food and returning again. Wouldn't finish his food at times. His dentals were current. Used as a trail horse. The kicking in the trailer was thought to be due to nervousness.

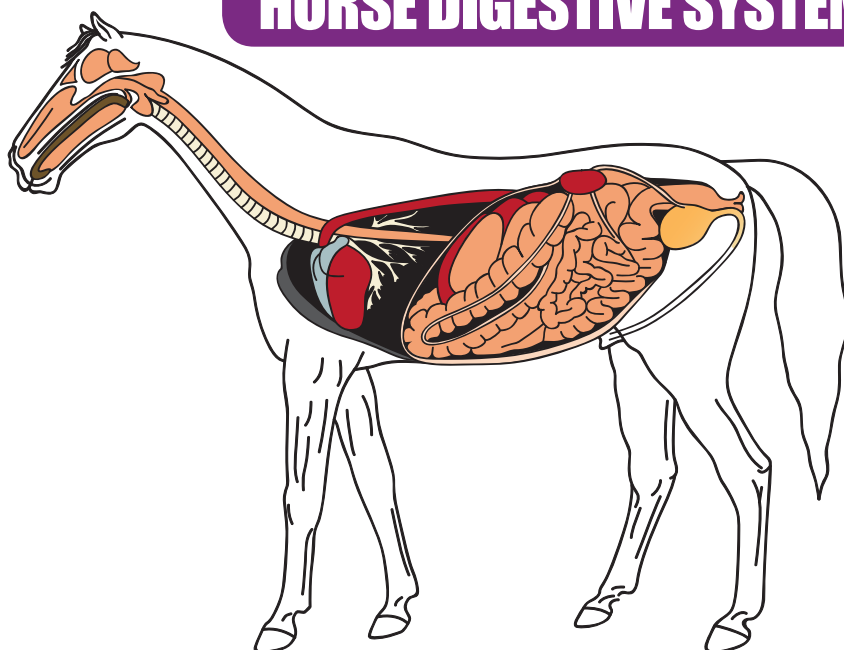
I continued to seek answers. It was not until I came across someone who had a horse with ulcers that I was alerted that Jay probably had ulcers and the kicking in the trailer was probably due to him being in pain.

At first I denied the possibility, but shortly after it hit me. I began reading everything I could get my hands on about equine ulcers. It quickly got overwhelming and confusing. Many products, therapies, and tests exist to treat ulcers, with many claims, suggestions, and promises. The economy had taken a dive, I had lost customers in my work, and finding additional work was next to impossible. At this point, Jay was losing weight, fecal tests were negative.

I finally found a product that was offered to many who had horses with ulcers; it was often used to confirm ulcers. Of course, it was not an official diagnosis from a qualified veterinarian, but it was good enough for me. I had every confidence in where I had been led, and took the positive result as a definite diagnosis of Jay's ulcers.

So, I began with small changes. Diet change. Moved him to a new barn, where he was on grass 24/7. Found several stomach soothers to help him during times when his ulcer bothered him, until I could find something that

## HORSE DIGESTIVE SYSTEM



healed it. I also started him on a probiotic, offered free choice hay during the winter season, and reduced stress at the barn as best I could. Stomach soothers were also administered to Jay before trailering. I started to see some slight improvements, but there were still setbacks.



Jay's issues with chronic ulcer led Diana to a holistic approach to treatment.

### JOURNAL LOG: June 2010 to March 2011

Tried many natural methods to heal or assist with ulcers suggested by several holistic practitioners and veterinarians. Tried several probiotics, bentonite clay, herbals, fruits and vegetables, cayenne pepper, minerals, some stress reduction (that I had control over), etc. No improvement. Ulcer attacks would occur occasionally. Used stomach soothers to counter the pain, which helped but did not heal ulcer. Conventional and holistic therapies or products wanted anywhere from \$400-\$800 a month, for several months, which was out of reach for me financially. I was tired, weary, and questioned if I should even continue. Should I find a new home for Jay? Who would possibly want an ulcer horse? Or even take on the care, treatment, and expense? Should I put him out of his misery? And, if I was able to come up with the expense for a treatment, what if it didn't work?

### JOURNAL LOG: March 2011 to Sept 2012

After much research, I decided on a product that is similar to GastroGard, omeprazole being the primary ingredient, and repeatedly suggested as the most widely known solution to "heal" ulcers. It was a 5-day plan. Results after treatment: One improvement – manure looked healthier. Back to the drawing board.

I found a new treatment – Bioenergetic balancing (which is claimed to restore healthy energetic patterns to the internal organs of the body, as well as to remove all negative patterns from the body's energetic field. The aim is for the restoration of healthy energy flow within the body's energy systems, resulting in improved vitality and optimal wellness) and homeopathy; two rounds of treatments.

All ulcer symptoms stopped! Went one year without ulcer symptoms! After one year, started seeing some symptoms again. Did another homeopathic treatment in spring 2012. Symptoms subsided again through the summer and into early fall.

Ulcer information suggests that equine ulcers are with your horse for life – they can heal, but they can also relapse within 72 hours.

### JOURNAL LOG: September 2012

It took a lot of research, hunting, and talking to many "natural equine" minded people before I found products that best supported Jay and prevented his ulcer from reoccurring. Adjustments to Jay's natural health care program are ongoing. Currently considering chiropractic care, acupressure, along with blood and fecal tests (Dr. Harman, DVM) for hidden ulcers, and utilizing essential oils and supplements to continue with an ulcer-free program, in addition to supportive products, diet, and environmental & emotional considerations that have proven to work best for Jay. ♡♡

www.naturalhorse.com

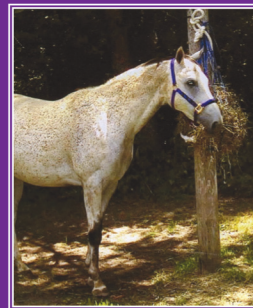


#### About the author:

Diana has a lifelong union with horses. Beginning at age 2 on her Aunt's horse, foggy morning rides in Epsom, England at the age of 5, to trail riding & horse camping today in Michigan. Diana is passionate with an insatiable appetite for sharing and learning about natural health and essential oils for a health sustaining, uplifting and spiritual life! Social Media Manager-Coordinator by day, in addition to pursuing a dream of making a difference in the horses and our animal families with essential oils. Diana teaches classes, coaches and is a resource guide for natural health. You can contact Diana at TarkWitezii@aol.com or 248-882-7484.

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