



OVER 20'S HEALTHCARE PLAN

As our horses get older they are increasingly likely to need veterinary care. Many are still ridden and seemingly need very little veterinary involvement, but just as in humans, age-related changes can creep up on us.

Many older horses are retired to pasture and whilst this sounds lovely in principle, the increased time and money spent on new horses can mean less time and money is available for the retired horse.

We think that older horses need to be seen by the vet more regularly than their younger companions so that we address any problems before they develop.

We think the treatment and examinations included in our Over 20's health care plan are really important.

What the plan includes:

- **Two visits including full health checks a year**
The first one will include an annual **vaccination booster** (flu and/or flu & tetanus booster).
The second, ideally six months later includes a **dental examination** and required **rasping**.
- **Three worm egg counts** per year (ideally in spring, summer and autumn).
We will discuss the results with you and advise any necessary treatment.
- **Reminder service** for worm egg counts.
- **Reminder service** for annual vaccination and when health checks are due.

The Cost:

We have managed to put the whole plan together for the **discounted price of £150 per year**, or £13 paid monthly by direct debit.

The plan does not include:

- **Any sedation that may be required for a dental examination**
- **Any treatment (e.g. wormers or anti-inflammatories)**
- **Any further diagnostic tests (e.g. blood samples)**



OVER 20'S HEALTHCARE PLAN

Why do we think this health care plan is important?

1. **VACCINATION:** *does an old horse need vaccination? They don't go anywhere and surely they've "built up enough immunity" anyway?*

If your horse(s) NEVER go anywhere and NEVER come into nose-to-nose contact with other horses and you and others dealing with your horses NEVER see other horses then their risk of developing influenza is minimal and you have an argument for dropping their flu jabs. However, in reality such situations are very unusual. Even if your horses do fall into this bracket they will still need vaccinating against tetanus which they can contract from the environment and is a horrible, fatal disease.

The vaccines available only reliably boost antibody levels in the first few months after vaccination and influenza immunity – a horse's immunity usually reduces with age.

2. **WORMING:** *Is it necessary in older horses?*

There is no scientific evidence that any resistance to internal parasites develops in old age, but many older horses have difficulty maintaining body weight, so it is vital that we don't allow a parasite burden to build up which can affect a horse's ability to maintain weight

3. **DENTAL TREATMENT:** *Is it necessary for an older horse who isn't in work and seems to eat ok?*

In short, yes! Even those that aren't dropping lots of hay and evading the bit can still have some nasty sharp hooks on their teeth that are causing cheek and tongue ulceration. As a horse ages they also become more likely to suffer from periodontal disease and problems associated with gaps between the teeth ("diastemata"). This can be quite painful and reduce your horse's quality of life.

4. **TWO HEALTH CHECKS PER YEAR:**

When you see your horse every day you don't necessarily notice weight loss, low-level lameness or that he's "slowed down a bit". Often there can be painful issues behind these problems (e.g. dental problems or low level lameness) or hormonal problems (e.g. Cushing's disease). With good monitoring and early intervention these problems can be addressed and hopefully your horse will get a new lease of life.

We hope you will want to jump at the chance to take up this offer of increased affordable veterinary care for your horse so please give the equine office a call or download the application form to sign up for the Over 20's Plan.

Terms & Conditions apply