

TTouches for Colic

By Marie Hoffman

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First, I need to mention that TTouches do not replace the vet. ALWAYS call the vet first and then you can do the TTouches until the vet arrives. Our vet called me up to see if I could come help at a neighbor's farm. The husband was in surgery with a life threatening operation. The person in charge of feeding the horses forgot to lock a gate and 6 horses got into the grain. With no one to help, the vet called us and as many boarders as she could reach.

When we arrived 4 of the horses had responded to the medicine and the fifth did shortly after. One horse did not. He was a bay gelding. When we arrived he was being walked. He did not want to move. He was shaking and dripping sweat. It was obvious he was in a great deal of pain. The vet had given him all she could to relieve the pain, and did not have any other medical options. His owner, also the stable owner, was at the hospital dealing with her husband being near death and could not make the decision on what to do with the horse.

My husband and I tried to keep the horse walking. It was obvious that the horse was in a lot of pain. The vet who was familiar with TTEAM said it was okay if we tried some TTouches to see if they would help.

First we started with belly lifts. Gary (my husband) stood on one side of the horse and I stood on the other. We grasped a cinch under his belly by his girth area. Gary held his end still while I lifted my end up until I put pressure on his girth area. I breathed as I counted to 4 then VERY slowly released while I was breathing, and did not release completely until I had reached the number 8 as I counted. Then we moved back the width of the cinch and repeated the sequence. Once we reached the flank we went back up towards the girth and started again.

While we did this, I instructed the person holding the horse to do TTouch ear slides. This is where the person starts at the base of the ear, folds the ear and adds pressure while sliding the hand toward the tip of the ear. The hand is folded over the ear. The ears are not pulled but pressure is applied along the whole ear thus applying pressure to all the acupressure points of the ear. Once the person reached the tip of the ear she applied firm pressure for several seconds, holding the tip between her thumb and index finger. She repeated the ear slides one hand on each ear as she faced the horse.

At times she would also press her fingers on the horses muzzle between his nostrils and this will help the horse release his own pain killers. She pressed on the out side of the muzzle at the same place where the gum meets the lips on the inside of the horse's mouth. The pressure is applied for 30 seconds to a minute.

After about five minutes the horse stopped sweating and shaking. He stood quietly with his head lowered to have the person work his ears. If she stopped, he would push her with his head to encourage her to continue. His pulse dropped from over 100 to 65.

After about another 5 minutes, the vet felt what he was responding better to the TTouches better than walking, so she said to lead him to a stall and continue. We continued for three more hours. We took turns with the others there as our arms became tired. The horse tried to pass gas and nothing would come out. He stood quiet while we worked on him. He did not sweat up again.

It had become obvious what the vet had felt in the beginning was true, that he had a twisted intestine. The owner did not want to put him down or have him operated on. We continued. Though he stood comfortably while we did the TTouches his gums were indicating that he was not doing very good. His gum color continued to turn a darker reddish brown.

The owner arrived at the stable; her husband had made it through the surgery and was going to live. Shortly after her arrival, the horse staggered and we left the stall on the vet's instructions. The horse died within minutes.

Though this situation did not have a happy ending, I feel confident the TTouches helped make the last hours of this horse's life more comfortable, and they helped him not spend his last hours in intense pain and suffering.

I have helped horses over the years with gas colics with many of them no longer colicing when the vet arrived. Maybe they would have recovered on their own or what I did helped. I am not sure. But I do know the horses do lower their heads for the ear slides, even horses that do not like their ears handled. Then as soon as they feel better they no longer want me to touch

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their ears. Most horses will no longer want to roll once the belly lifts are started. Often they will pass gas after about 5 passes of belly lifts girth to flank.

I walk them if they look like they will lie down. If they look like they will stand for the belly lifts I feel it is better than walking them into exhaustion in case they need their strength for surgery.

When I am by myself, I do belly lifts by attaching a lead rope to the cinch and hold that over the horse's back or I use a surcingle. After 10 times of going girth to flank I will do ear slides about 10 or so and then apply pressure to the point in the middle of the nostrils for a minute. Then I start all over again. I continue until the vet arrives or the horse is eating again.

The TTouches will not mask a serious colic. If they do help the horse, once you stop doing them the symptoms will return if the horse is not over his colic. His gum color will not be affected.

ALWAYS CALL THE VET FIRST when your horse colic's. Then applying TTouches will give you something to do while you wait and they may even help your horse.