Understanding EPM
A horse owner’s guide to detection and treatment.

We’re for knowing the signs of EPM. We’re for the earliest possible diagnosis in hopes of a better outcome. And, most of all, we’re for an easier way to treat a sick horse.

Introducing Protazil® (1.56% diclazuril), the new, convenient way to treat EPM.

Protazil is the first FDA-approved alfalfa-based pelleted treatment that makes accurate dosing and administration simple. Ask your veterinarian for Protazil. Because we’re for helping you help your horse.

Use of Protazil (1.56% diclazuril) is contraindicated in horses with known hypersensitivity to diclazuril. Safe use in horses used for breeding purposes, during pregnancy, or in lactating mares has not been evaluated. The safety of Protazil with concomitant therapies in horses has not been evaluated.


Available in 2- and 10-pound tubs from your veterinarian.

EPM: The most common neurological disease in horses.

Equine protozoal myeloencephalitis (EPM) is a progressive and potentially fatal infection of the central nervous system. It is caused by a single-celled protozoal microorganism, most commonly Sarcocystis neurona (S. neurona), and is primarily transmitted by opossums in their feces.

Researchers estimate that approximately 30 to 80% of the U.S. horse population has come in contact with the parasite and produced antibodies. However, not all horses exposed become infected or develop clinical signs. In fact, the incidence of EPM may be less than 1%.

What to do if you suspect EPM.

If your horse starts stumbling or exhibits any of the signs listed, you need to get your veterinarian involved immediately. Early intervention with aggressive treatment is the key to recovery.

Irreversible damage to the brain or spinal cord is more likely to occur if the parasite has been present for long periods of time. Without treatment, many horses progressively deteriorate to the point that they are unable to stand.

If EPM is suspected, your veterinarian will perform a complete physical and neurological examination. Other tests may be indicated to rule out lamenosses and other neurologic diseases that can mimic EPM. A sample of blood and spinal fluid are often tested for antibodies against S. neurona using one of several laboratory tests, including the Western blot, IFAT and SAG-ELISA.

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We’re for the horse.
And for helping the unwanted horse. Visit uhvrno.org

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Photo ©Melanie Snowhite 44053 9/11 EQ-BIO-1149-EPM
The many faces of EPM.

EPM has been called “the master of disguise” because it can mimic so many other neurological diseases, such as West Nile virus, rabies and spinal cord compression problems. While diagnostic tests are available, none can give an absolute answer as to whether or not the horse has the disease. Additional rounds of treatment may be prescribed.

Manageable, but not preventable.

There is no way to prevent EPM as no vaccine exists. The best way to reduce the risk of your horse contracting the disease is to minimize exposure to opossum feces. Risk factors include:

- Gall abatements
- Incoordination, ataxia
- Head tilt, ear droop
- Behavior change
- Muscle atrophy
- Development
- Depression

Clinical signs of EPM vary depending on which part of the central nervous system is parasitized:

- Presence of opossums
- Previously infected horses on premises
- Summer and fall (winter has fewer cases)
- Stress — including shipping or recent illness
- Wooded terrain near pastures
- Feed and hay accessible to opossums

Horses 1-6 years of age are at the highest risk of developing protozoal myeloencephalitis (EPM). The many faces of EPM.

Your horse has EPM. Now what?

Once a diagnosis is confirmed, your veterinarian will prescribe a daily EPM treatment such as Protazil® (1.56% diclazuril), here’s what you can expect for a plan of action:

1. Determine your horse’s weight using a scale or weight tape. Administer the correct dose of Protazil as a top-dress for 28 days. It’s crucial to the recovery of your horse that no doses are missed.
2. Your veterinarian may also recommend anti-inflammatories during this time, as well as supplements that include vitamin E and selenium.
3. Your horse will need to be re-evaluated by your veterinarian during treatment to determine response to therapy. Additional rounds of treatment may be prescribed.
4. Minimize your horse’s stress for the duration of treatment. Hand walking and light exercise are often helpful during the recovery phase.
5. Horses that are diagnosed early and treated expeditiously have the best chance for recovery. Most horses do respond to treatment, but with varying degrees of recovery. With treatment, 60 - 70% of horses will show improvement in clinical signs. At least 10% of horses experience a relapse within 3 years of discontinuing therapy.

Call your veterinarian if any of these signs appear.

CAUTION
Federal law restricts this drug to use by or on the order of a licensed veterinarian.
NADA 414-218 Approved by FDA

Diclazuril,

Diclazuril, (a 2,6-dichloro-N — [4-chlorophenyl]-4,5- dihydro-1,2 thiazine-3-carboxamide base, has a molecular formula of C17H13Cl3N2O2S, a molecular weight of 407.48, and a molecular structure as follows:

Protazil® (1.56% diclazuril) is an antiprotozoal (antiparasitic) compound with a molecular formula of C17H13Cl3N2O2S, a molecular weight of 407.48, and a molecular structure as follows:

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Precautionary Measures in Horses

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