

Thrush

What is it?

Thrush is an infection of the frog. Bacteria (and/or fungi, and/or yeasts) invade the collateral grooves (on either side of the frog) and the central sulcus (middle of the V) of the frog.

You may notice a gray or black discharge, an offensive odor, and disintegration of the frog tissue.

Occasionally, thrush will become severe enough to affect the deeper layers of the foot, and bleeding, serious infection, inflammation of the navicular bursa and the deep digital flexor tendon, and severe lameness can occur.



Natural Hoof Care by Rob Sawyer



Environment

The area where your horse lives is a significant factor in thrush occurrence. Eliminate urine soaked bedding or footing. Remove manure build up, particularly around water troughs or hay feeders. If you have a hay feeder, remove old, waste hay build up.

The key to recurrence is preventing these environmental factors from returning.

Diet

Horses on a high sugar diet are at higher risk for thrush. Evaluate reducing sugar intake (such as molasses in sweet feed).

Treatment Options

Zephyr's Garden

I try the least caustic approach possible for each case. Zephyr's Garden has good quality, natural products for treating thrush, including Thrush and Hoof Fungus Spray. While these products cost slightly more, they are free of caustic chemicals and dyes.

Central Sulcus

If there is a deep crevice in the middle of the frog, use a dairy cow/goat mastitis treatment such as "Today", "Tomorrow", or "Dry Off". Use about 1/3 of a tube in each infected frog. Repeat daily until resolved.

Trimming

If thrush is a problem, your horse may be due for a trim. Frog flaps that are dead, but fail to wear off, create a haven for bacteria growth. We may need to adjust the trimming schedule to resolve the thrush.

Conventional Products

Online retailers and local feed, tack, or farm stores, carry a large variety of Thrush elimination products such as "Thrush Buster", "Thrush Off", and "Thrush Stop". Treatment with any of these products should help improve the infection, however, if the environment is not improved, the infection may not completely resolve.

Hoof Soak

Severely infected hooves (or ones that haven't responded to other treatment) may require a more aggressive treatment. Eradicate the infection by soaking the hoof for 20 minutes a day in a 50/50 apple cider vinegar and water mix or "Clean Trax" (available online).