Anaplasmosis (Equine Granulocytic Ehrlichiosis)

Anaplasmosis in horses is caused by bacteria called *Anaplasma phagocytophila*, which are spread by a **tick-bite**. This bacterium was formally known as *Ehrlichia equi* and the disease was previously called “equine ehrlichiosis” or “equine granulocytic ehrlichiosis” (EGE).

*Ehrlichia equi* was thought to be a separate bacterium unique to horses, but recently has been found to be genetically the same as *Anaplasma phagocytophila* and thus the name was changed. *Anaplasma phagocytophila* also causes “canine anaplasmosis” in dogs and “human granulocytic ehrlichiosis” (HGE) in people. Anaplasmosis is not considered contagious & is only transmitted via a tick bite or transfer of blood. We have seen cases of EGE in our practice area.

**The tick:** “deer tick” = *Ixodes scapularis*- can transmit Anaplasma as well as Lyme's disease; It’s a very small tick: see the following links for photos & more info:  
http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/idepc/dtopics/tickborne/ticks.html  

**Reservoirs** that carry this tick: -small rodents- white-footed mouse, chipmunks, voles  
-white-tailed deer

**Symptoms** in horses: fever, depression, decreased appetite, limb swelling (look “stocked-up”), jaundice, reluctance to move &/or weakness/wobbliness, small red dots on gums

**Treatment**: a specific **antibiotic**- IV +/- oral (some horses with mild signs may get over it on their own, but some horses can get very sick)

**Prevention**: Tick-control is the primary means of prevention (there is no vaccine available). Avoid tick-infested areas. Use fly/mosquito repellents that also repel ticks. Spray the tail hairs on your horse- ticks often crawl up the tail hair & then attach at the tip of the tail. Always follow label instructions. Apply before going out on trail-rides or when your horse is at risk of getting exposed to ticks. Do a “tick-check” and remove ticks. Here’s a link to safely remove ticks:  
http://www.cdc.gov/ticks/removing_a_tick.html

**In addition to your horse, consider tick control for your pets as well as yourself; there are excellent topical treatments for your pets: Certifect™, Advantix™, & Vectra™ (these are for dogs only), and Frontline™ (for dog & cats)- help kill ticks before transmission of bacteria occurs & are applied once a month. Front-line spray has been used extra-label on horses for tick control. Call us for more information on controlling ticks to help keep your horses and pets healthy.**

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