

Colic

by Barbara Janelle

Hannabal starts to shake, first in the flank and then it spreads until a fine trembling can be seen and felt throughout his chest and trunk. Pain lines appear above his nostrils. His respiration becomes more rapid and shallow. His eyes look inward and stare. He turns and looks at his belly on the left side near the flank; this area is as tight as a drum.

When the shaking starts, Linda Markey and I go to work. Linda massages the acupressure points in Hanna's ears with firm sliding movements of her fingers. I begin a Therapeutic Touch assessment and balancing of the energy field. Ken Charron gives him some Bach Flower Rescue Remedy. Then Ken and I use a 12" wide quilted leg bandage to do two series of TTEAM belly lifts. Linda continues to work Hanna's ears and rub the gas release point between the tail and the anus. Hanna releases some gas, but the shaking continues.

Ken takes his temperature while Linda and I continue to work. 101.5 degrees - normal, but he sure is not looking good. Ken and I do two more series of belly lifts and rub the gas point again. A little more gas comes out. The pain lines and trembling are still present. More Therapeutic Touch to move that pocket of energy build-up in that left flank. Why doesn't the pain and trembling diminish? Gas is being released but Hanna still looks bad. I lift the left hind leg trying to dislodge the gas. Linda is on the ears all the while. Ken and I do another series of belly

lifts and finally - POOP!

We laugh in total delight at Hanna's passing dung! He is no longer trembling and the pain lines are disappearing. Into his stall he goes. Let's see if he'll drink some water and eat some hay. Hannabal quaffs his hay down with great gusto and wonders why we watch him with such concern. He feels fine. Ken prepared a bran mash for him. Thirty minutes of work brought Hannabal out of colic.

Linda Markey and I work with the horses at SARI - The Special Abilities Riding Institute in London, Ontario every Friday morning. We have not seen any colic cases for quite a while. Indeed the last one was a year ago when Hanna's automatic waterer froze and he colicked. That time Fiona Stewart directed her SARI volunteers to do the TTEAM ear work, belly lifts and pain and gas point massage. By the time I arrived twenty-five minutes after the colic had started, Hanna was fine.

Hanna had a tendency to colic early in his career at SARI. We learned not to put riders that bounced too much or were dead weight on his back. For a few weeks some years ago, he had a rider like this every Wednesday night; and he would colic every Thursday morning like clockwork. Linda and I were going in on Thursday at that time and we got a fair bit of practice dealing with colic.

Hanna also holds things in and he cribs. Ken Charron, SARI's superb barn manager watches carefully and notifies us when Hanna needs special attention. Indeed the morning of his colic, Ken had asked us to work on Hanna because he was a bit gloomy. The cause this time was a new horse who has been picking on Hanna and chasing him.

We have also found that putting Hannabal on Harvest Spring hydroponic barley as a daily supplement has made a tremendous difference for him. Two colics in the two years since he has been on this supplement (both for definite reasons) is far better than the weekly or monthly colics that he suffered before the advent of the barley. Half the SARI horses are on the hydroponic barley now and their digestion has improved significantly.