

IF YOU BREED HORSES, THEN YOU NEED TO BE AWARE OF NAVEL ILL.

By Jennifer Hurt

The morning of June 21, 2010 started like every morning. My husband Ron getting up before me to feed the horses before leaving for work. He came in and woke me up stating that our mare was going to be having her baby today as something was hanging from her rear-end. I quickly put on my clothes and went to investigate.

Sure enough, there was a bag hanging from her -THE WHOLE BAG - BUT no baby in sight anywhere. She wasn't due until July 8th and all worries quickly set in. I called my vet Sarah, who is six months pregnant herself, waking her up. I explained that the mare had her bag hanging but no baby in sight. Could it possibly be that the baby was still in her? She looked skinnier but where else could the baby be? She told me that she didn't think it was possible but that she was on her way.

The vet showed up 15 minutes later. She palpated her and found no baby in the mare. We searched the area. We found where she would have given birth but no "dragging" marks or blood but no baby hoof prints. It was like he was a phantom. We knew there should be a baby but there was no signs of him besides an empty bag. Could he be in the horse pasture next to this one where my *Naborr grandson stallion and his two gelding buddies reside? The vet Sarah put the mare in the barn to give her a more thorough check.

I started to search the adjoining pasture and quickly realized that my *Naborr grandson was NOT coming up and bugging me like he normally would. I quickly searched the area with my eyes and found him grazing near the area where the pond is. The pond is more like an oversized puddle with swamp trees growing around it. Upon arriving at that area, I saw a little black foal standing in the middle of that oversized puddle with mud and water up to his knees. I ran to the barn, screaming for the vet that I found him.



After putting the boys into their stalls, we went to the pond to get him out. All we had to do was get behind him and he ran out. We walked him up to the barn where he was reunited with his mom. An iodine treatment was given to his navel and a bottle full of his mom's colostrum. Soon, he was eating on his own, so we decided to give him and mom time to bond. The vet told us that she would be out the next day to do an IGG test and advised us to get some Probios and give it to him everyday for three days.

For the rest of the day and the next, we watched from our television to see if he was getting up and nursing. He did get up and nurse but it seemed every two to three hours. Not as much as we wanted. Sometimes, we had to help him get up and nurse. Without having the knowledge of Navel Ill, we assumed he was exhausted from his birth. His IGG test came back at an 800 which is the minimal amount he should get. We would have liked it to be higher but 800 is alright.

On June 23rd, two days after the birth of this guy, we noticed a slight limp and swelling on two legs, plus we had a hard time getting him up that morning. I called the vet Sarah who advised me to come and get some medication from her. I quickly drove to her office and got three days worth of Amakacin, Penicillian and Banamine. We went home and gave it to him. The medication took affect and he was up and going again.



On June 25th, the vet Sarah came out to ultrasound the mare as she was to be rebred. I had her look at his right front knee as it was slightly swelled. She felt around that joint and the others and gave us the bad news.

Our little guy has Navel Ill (a.k.a. Joint Ill). He's got at least four joints that are with infection. The vet called the University as she recommended taking him to the University and they stated it would have to be aggressively treated and that it would cost anywhere from \$4000 to \$6000 and he would NOT be sound. With the heavy aggressive treatment, he could maybe be sound for breeding. My vet recommended putting him down.



I was so devastated. Here my very first black straight Egyptian foal by an awesome reining

champion stallion, in which, I nominated through the Pyramid Society as I just knew he was going to have the "WOW" factor, is now sick and should be put down. I just couldn't do it. I decided to keep him going until he was 10 days old as he had been on his medications for three days now and the vet did say it would normally take 5 to 7 days to show improvement. But it didn't look good.

He was bouncing around and running and drinking very well like a healthy foal but the vet was afraid that the bacteria had spread too much. I turned to my friends on egyptianbreeders.com for suggestions and comments.

By June 27th, the colt was doing much better. We still had him on 2cc of Amakacin and 6cc of Penicillin as well as Banamine - all twice a day. June 27th was his fifth day on those medications. My husband's aunt is also a vet who got a broken hip a few weeks back, so she couldn't treat him but was consulting with us as well. Due to everyone's suggestions on the forum as well as private emails, I had been asking her opinion on some of the suggestions.

For the previous two days, we have been applying an ointment, mixed by my husband's aunt, on his joints, wrapping it with saran wrap and then a regular wrap. We would leave this on for 4 hours a day. They use this ointment for jumping horses in order to sweat the joints after a serious workout. We did notice that it did reduce his front left fetlock and pastern but that is the only joint that I thought I wrapped properly. (He was able to get the other wraps loose.) We didn't know if the wrappings would help, but it wouldn't hurt either.

His temperature had been good. We would take it twice daily. That morning it was 100.8 . We had him out for about 15 minutes and he was running around and bucking like a healthy colt, however, he did still have a limp with his front left leg.

We decided to keep him on the medication for another three days, and if no improvement, we would switch him to Naxcel, which would knock out the infection but could cause kidney failure. I had had a few people recommend this drug as it did work on their foals and my husband's aunt recommended this also but did think we should wait a few days so the colt's kidneys would become stronger. He was, however, urinating a little out of his navel. The vet Sarah said he will need surgery eventually. But she did not give me any instructions for this. We went ahead and started to treat his navel daily with iodine. His navel was NOT swollen and looked good, just would drip when he's done urinating.

I did go see a friend of mine's foal that day who was born three weeks early as well BUT who was healthy. It was great to compare the joints, size, and growth. Our colt is gaining weight and appears to have put more weight on than hers - so that makes me feel ALOT better. BUT I was able to see the difference in the joints.

On June 28th, we faced another problem. We have enough Amakacin for that day but that was it. The vet was out that morning to ultrasound the mare and told me she doesn't have any more. She stated she has called all the local suppliers and nobody has it. (It's on back order). My husband's aunt called a friend of hers who had some. He had five days worth but only would part with two days worth as he didn't know when he would get more due to the back order. I didn't care if I had to run to the next state, he



was going to get his medication! I went and got the two days worth. It was better than nothing.

In the meantime, the colt was acting very normal and his temperature that morning was 100.8. He runs around his stall and investigates the feed & water buckets. And of course, he's gaining a lot of weight as he eats a lot. I tried not to get my hopes up too high but watching how he acts - it's just hard not to.



On June 29th, I talked to a friend of mine's vet named Stacy who is also friends with my vet. She really felt uncomfortable talking to me as she didn't want my vet to think she was trying to steal her "client". BUT I explained that we are needing more Amakacin and told her of the circumstances and how my vet told me to just put him down and that I didn't feel she was giving me 100% good advise on treatment. She didn't have any Amakacin but said she is curious about this foal and would like to come examine him as she wasn't quite sure he did have Navel Ill as he was running around and putting pressure on his legs. I even took a video of the night before of him running around when we let them out for 15 minutes. She asked me if we tried to sweat his joints which I replied that yes, we are doing that BUT that our vet didn't know we were doing that. She decided to come out that afternoon and give him a physical exam and pull blood to see what bacteria he has and just how sick he was. (I think she was shock that our vet at least didn't pull blood before telling us to just put him down.) She thought maybe he had swollen joints from standing in mud to his knees in that dried up pond.



Well the vet Stacy came out, looked at him, and gave me some options. Obviously I took her up on the suggestion of flushing out the joints! We did it right then and there. Sedated him, laid him on a clean blanket, and started flushing. The front left pastern was the hardest. It was so thick with infection, that it was clogging the needle. The front right knee wouldn't flush nothing out. After attempting for so long and having to give our guy another dose of sedation, we injected some medication into it (in fact, we finished all joints with injection of medication). The left hock drained a lot and with no problems. She said that one was not as old as the other joints, which is why it drained so good. The whole process took a long time and we ended up sedating him three times. (She hasn't had one this infected before but has dealt with this a lot.) All of this FOR ONLY \$250!!!! I wish I would have called her last week! So now we wait until tomorrow. If the joint swelling is down, then we will continue him on his medication, as well as adding another med and have him take those for a week. If he was NOT doing better by tomorrow, we will repeat all of this. However, most likely he will never be sound for riding but we were all hopeful that he will be sound for breeding.

The next morning came and the swelling didn't look like it went down any. I called the vet Stacy and advised her and asked if we should do another flushing. She told me that we could but that she did feel that we were maybe throwing good money out the door. She was sorry but wished that I at least found peace in doing the flushing.

Later that day, one of the posters on the forum suggested sweating his joints with Ichthammol 20%. We decided to give it ago. We wrapped his joints that night and left it on for 12 hours. The next morning showed the swelling HAD gone down! We rewrapped that night and left it on for another 12 hours.

On the morning of July 2nd when we un-wrapped his legs, we noticed even more swelling had gone down. I called vet Stacy and advised her of the reduction of the swelling. She was surprised but happy. I advised her that we had switched the Amakacin to Naxcel since Amakacin was hard to get and that vet Sarah was coming to Al the mare that afternoon. Did she want me to have vet Sarah look at the foal or did she want to come and examine the foal? She told me to have vet Sarah look at the foal and advise her.

Vet Sarah saw some reduction and thought another flushing would be good. So vet Stacy came out and flushed the joints again. She was so happy to see how much the swelling did reduce. She decided to flush the hind hock and then the front pastern, and not the knee. We were so thrilled to see...CLEAR FLUID COMING OUT!!! That's right. We were able to flush and it went great! Not the "cottage cheese" infection that was coming out on Tuesday's flushing. She looked me right in the eyes and told me that "you and your husband performed a miracle". She just could not believe how his condition turned around. So, while he was under, I rewrapped his legs. She said to definitely keep doing the wrappings as they appear to be helping. The next day I was to give her a call and advise her on how he is doing. She said the swelling will probably take 7 to 10 days to completely go away. Of course, we are both excited to see what future x-rays will tell us. She had decided to not make a prediction on soundness as he

has shocked her already. Later that day, upon reviewing my notes, I noticed that we AI the mare on August 11 & 12th the year before. That makes the gestation 314. The vet couldn't believe that for 314 day gestation that he looks as well as he does. She says he's gaining weight, heart sounded perfect, lungs sounded perfect - just healthy besides these joints.

The next day my friend came out and looked at the colt. She couldn't believe how healthy he acted. She even stated that if she didn't know he had Navel Ill, she would have thought he was 100% healthy. I called the vet and advised her that we both felt he had improved again.

Giving the colt his shots started becoming a real challenge though. Although we would grab his tail and hold it way up, he still would manage to "buck and bolt" to get away. His little behind was so sore from all of the shots.

On July 7th, vet Stacy came and took x-rays and fluid samples. What we had discovered was that the fluid from his front knee was actually old blood and that the swelling on his knee was from repeating banging from lying down which meant more shavings were needed in his stall for more cushion.



from his hock. SO...not much infection!!! She did tell me that most likely he will always have a little swelling there UNLESS it gets hidden the more he grows. We did get a little sample from that hock. We didn't take samples from the pastern but she said the x-rays should tell us what we have. Also the x-rays would tell us how much longer for medication and his soundness so far. We decided to change the Naxcel to SMZ as we didn't feel the Naxcel was making an improvement. I am so happy about that as the SMZ are given orally and that boy had a sore butt.



That evening vet Stacy called with the results. She said he really was the miracle baby. His joints were not septic but reactive. His pastern did lose a little cartilage and he may have a bone infection in his growth plate in his hock, the x-ray wasn't clear on that. HOWEVER, good news was that he will be rideable in the future and NO MORE INJECTIONS IN THE BUTT!

He was to be confined to a stall (not the stall & barn isle I have been letting him have) and is to receive 3 SMZ pills, twice a day for the next two weeks, at which time, she would come and x-ray the hock only. The little guy was so active, that I knew he was going to hate the confinement BUT was going to LOVE not getting anymore shots!

Two days later (July 9th) we noticed his limp was a little more defined. I called the vet Stacy and left a message on her voicemail of the condition of the colt that I was seeing. She called back minutes later and advised me that we should start him immediately with 8cc of Penicillin, twice a day - do that until Monday morning and call her with an update.

By Monday morning, we noticed an improvement. We, including the vet, decided to keep him on the Penicillin, SMZ's and Banamine, but to increase the Banamine from once a day to twice a day. By this time, he has grown like a weed and has become incredibly strong, causing us much trouble in giving him shots. One time he was able to bolt his way out of both of ours grip and barely missed my head when he kicked up.

Luckily, on July 20th, vet Stacy came and took new x-rays. She was going to advise us on the results and to keep giving medicine until she called us.

It was two days before we heard from her as she had emergencies with a local breeding farm. BUT the great news was no more infection and no more medicine. We were to limit his turnout until his joints fused.

The lessons we learned and the tears we shed, have been numerous. We have made a video of this colts process during this time and posted it onto YouTube for educational purposes. If one is going to breed horses, one needs to know about this condition.

**The full names of the vets were not posted. This colt is named JRs Al Shabah al Aswad, which means "The Black Phantom". He currently is still nominated with the Pyramid Society and is scheduled to be shown in halter if his joint fuses in a reasonable amount of time.*

6/21/10 Foal born early (314 days). Found in pond. Received navel swab, enema, and bottle of mom's milk.

6/22/10 IGG test showed 800. Banamine Given. Eveningtime, he doesn't want to eat.

6/23/10 Noticed swelling in left front leg and left hind leg. Called vet who advised to come pick up medicine from her office. Administer 2cc of Amakacin, 6cc of Penicillin, 1/2 dot of Banamine, > all of this twice a day. Gave enema. Evening we noticed he was favoring front left leg when we let him out of his stall for 15 minutes.

6/24/10 Moving around good - except for limp. Noticed swelling of front right knee. Let him out for 15 minutes again.
Administered: 2cc Amakacin x 2; 6cc of Penicillin x 2; 1/2 dot of Banamine x 2.

6/25/10 Vet came out to ultrasound mare. Had her look at joints. She examined him and advised us that he has joint ill and advises us to put him down or take him to university which will require treatment costs of \$4,000 to \$10,000. We decided to treat him ourselves. Took temperature in evening - it was 102 degrees.
Administered: 2cc Amakacin x 2; 6cc of Penicillin x 2; 1/2 dot of Banamine x 2.

6/26/10 Applied a tropical ointment on swollen joints with wrap. Left on four 4 hours. Morning temp: 101.2; Nighttime temp: 101.9.
Administered: 2cc Amakacin x 2; 6cc of Penicillin x 2; 1/2 dot of Banamine x 2.

6/27/10 Applied wrap with tropical ointment. Morning temp: 100.8; Night temp: 101.1.
Administered: 2cc Amakacin x 2; 6cc of Penicillin x 2; 1/2 dot of Banamine x 2.

6/28/10 No wrap today. Morning temp: 100.8; Night Temp: 100.5.
Administered: 2cc Amakacin x 2; 6cc of Penicillin x 2; 1/2 dot of Banamine x 2.

6/29/10 No wrap today. Did joint flushings on three joints. Morning temp: 100.2.
Administered: 2cc Amakacin x 2; 6cc of Penicillin x 2; 1/2 dot of Banamine x 2.

6/30/10 Noticed very little joint swollen reduction. Vet doesn't want to do another joint flushing - doesn't think it will do any good. Wrapped legs for 12 hours with Ichthammol 20%.
Administered: 2cc Amakacin x 2; 6cc of Penicillin x 2; 1/2 dot of Banamine x 2.

7/1/10 Noticed more swelling reduction. 12 hour wrap with Ichthammol. Gave one pill of Zantac.
Administered: 2cc Amakacin x 2; 6cc of Penicillin x 2; 1/2 dot of Banamine x 2.

7/2/10 Switched the Amakacin with Naxcel since vet doesn't have anymore Amakacin. Did another joint flushing since we noticed more swelling reduction. Wrapped legs for 6 hours with Ichthammol 20%.
Administered: 4cc Naxcel x 2; 6cc of Penicillin x 2; 1/2 dot of Banamine x 2.

7/3/10 Ichthammol wrap for 6 hours. Morning temp: 100.8
Administered: 2cc Amakacin x 2; 6cc of Penicillin x 2; 1/2 dot of Banamine x 2.

7/4/10 Ichthammol wrap for 12 hours.
Administered: 2cc Amakacin x 2; 6cc of Penicillin x 2; 1/2 dot of Banamine x 2.

7/5/10 No wrap.
Administered: 2cc Amakacin x 2; 6cc of Penicillin x 2; 1/2 dot of Banamine x 2.

7/6/10 No wrap.
Administered: 2cc Amakacin x 2; 6cc of Penicillin x 2; 1/2 dot of Banamine x 2.

7/7/10 Vet came today to check progress. Took x-rays of four swollen joints and pulled fluid from right front knee and left hind hock only. Discovered that right knee had "old blood" meaning that swollen not due to infection but of constant banging on it when laying down. Very little infection was pulled from hock. Results showed: Joints no longer septic but are reactive. Infection had eaten some of the cartilage in front left pastern, however, he will be rideable, just won't be able to flex as well. X-ray was clear if there was a bone infection in the growth plate of the hock. We are to switch the Naxcel to SMZ, no more penicillin and reduce Banamine to once a day.
Administered: 3 pills of SMZ x 2; 1/2 dot of Banamine x 1.

7/8/10 Administered: 3 pills of SMZ x 2; 1/2 dot of Banamine x 1.

7/9/10 Administered: 3 pills of SMZ x 2 in the morning. Noticed limp more defined. Called vet. Advised to start Penicillin again. Call her on Monday.
Administered: 3 pills of SMZ x 2; 1/2 dot of Banamine x 1; 8cc of Penicillin x 1;

7/10/10 Administered: 3 pills of SMZ x 2; 1/2 dot of Banamine x 1; 8cc of Penicillin x 2.

7/11/10 Ichthammol wrap for 12 hours. Found natural ulcer medicine for horses that comes in a sauce form. Recommends feeding twice a day. We decided to give it only once a day by mixing his nightly SMZ's into it.
Administered: 3 pills of SMZ x 2; 1/2 dot of Banamine x 1; 8cc of Penicillin x 2.

7/12/10 Ichthammol wrap for 12 hours. Called vet to give status. Advised us to start giving Banamine twice a day. Also told us that swelling in hock and pastern may always be there. Limp will be there until at least the joints fuse.
Administered: 3 pills of SMZ x 2; 1/2 dot of Banamine x 1; 8cc of Penicillin x 2.

7/13/10 Getting stronger - With both of us holding him, he was able to bolt forward out of our grip and kicked up, just barely missing my head.
Administered: 3 pills of SMZ x 2; 1/2 dot of Banamine x 2; 8cc of Penicillin x 2.

7/14/10 Administered: 3 pills of SMZ x 2; 1/2 dot of Banamine x 2; 8cc of Penicillin x 2.

7/15/10 Administered: 3 pills of SMZ x 2; 1/2 dot of Banamine x 2; 8cc of Penicillin x 2.

7/16/10 Administered: 3 pills of SMZ x 2; 1/2 dot of Banamine x 1; 8cc of Penicillin x 2.

7/17/10 Administered: 3 pills of SMZ x 2; 1/2 dot of Banamine x 2; 8cc of Penicillin x 2.

7/18/10 Administered: 3 pills of SMZ x 2; 1/2 dot of Banamine x 1; 8cc of Penicillin x 2.

7/19/10 Administered: 3 pills of SMZ x 2; 1/2 dot of Banamine x 1; 8cc of Penicillin x 2.

7/20/10 Administered: 3 pills of SMZ x 2; 1/2 dot of Banamine x 1; 8cc of Penicillin x 2.
X-rays taken of joints.

7/21/10 Administered: 3 pills of SMZ x 2; 1/2 dot of Banamine x 1; 8cc of Penicillin x 2.

7/22/10 Administered: 3 pills of SMZ x 2; 1/2 dot of Banamine x 1; 8cc of Penicillin x 2.
Got x-ray results. It's finally over. We can stop all medication. Slow turnout until joint fuses. Start with doubling stall size for three hours per day for one week. Then turnout for full day for another week. Then add more area for another week, etc.

