



# Park Veterinary Centre

256 Cassiobury Drive. Watford. Herts. WD17 3PA

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## SARCOIDS

Sarcoids are a common skin disease of horses that should be viewed as a form of skin cancer. It is a tumour of fibroblasts, which are normal skin cells, therefore sarcoids only affect the skin and do not spread to other organs.

The cause is generally unknown, but papilloma virus is almost certainly involved.

Sarcoids tend to multiply and grow in size at varying rates.

Ulcerated sarcoids attract flies, which are thought to be responsible of the spread of sarcoids on the individual horse.

Sarcoids can form anywhere in the body. Lesions around eyes, joints, coronary bands or on wound sites can cause severe problems.

Behaviour of sarcoids is unpredictable. A lesion could stay unchanged for month or years and suddenly grow and /or ulcerate.

All sarcoids should be treated as soon as they are spotted to increase the chances of successful treatment.

The treatment is difficult and can be expensive, but it is easier to treat a small, benign looking lesion rather than a large ulcerated one!

There are many treatment options, but to date the most successful and cost effective topical treatment is a cytotoxic cream (AW4-LUDES).

When your vet will suspect the presence of a sarcoid, a picture of the lesion will be taken to be sent to a specialist team at Liverpool University who will advise a treatment protocol.

The AW4 LUDES cream is extremely toxic and it is only available to vets. Treatment often consists of a course of 3-6 applications, which will be done by your vet.

During treatment, horses may develop swelling and ulceration of the area. This is painful and horses may become dull. This is part of the treatment and normally of short duration. Pain killers can be administered to decrease discomfort and inflammation.

The treated sarcoid will change appearance and become back and hard and then will gradually drop off.

Please remember that sarcoids will often look worse before they get better.

Sarcoids in difficult areas, such as around eyes, may need a different treatment (BCG injections or radiation therapy) due to the sensitive location.

For more detailed information, please visit: [www.liv.ac.uk/sarcoids](http://www.liv.ac.uk/sarcoids)

## CASE HISTORY- DUKE

Duke is a 19 yr old gelding who had multiple large sarcoids in the chest area, which had been present for some time but had suddenly started to ulcerate.

The lesions were banded with an elastic band to cut the blood supply and AW4 LUDES cream was applied topically.

## BEFORE TREATMENT



*Lesions before treatment. Several nodules are present in the chest area.*

## AFTER TREATMENT



*3 months post treatment the lesions have considerably shrunk in size.*



*5 months post treatment a few small nodules are still present and may require further treatment to keep them under control, but most of the lesions have disappeared.*

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