



# **Horse Breather**

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[www.equinebreathing.com](http://www.equinebreathing.com)

## **Chronic Nasal Discharge – 1N trial**

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*Ellie's horse Bjork had a chronic low-grade unilateral nasal discharge and runny eyes which had lasted for months despite treatment. She coughed on exercise when fed hay and had become very lethargic. Ellie was very concerned. She decided to try Equine Breathing and participated in the Equine Breathing 1N trial. This is her trial report.*

Bjork is an 8 year old Icelandic Horse. She started to develop her symptoms a year ago when she came down with a cold following a training course away from home. Though she got over this quite quickly, there seemed to be something lingering. This got steadily worse until there were physical signs.

Her main symptom was a unilateral nasal discharge, from her left nostril. This started off white & frothy but soon developed into a green crusty state. For the first couple of months, the discharge wasn't constant, though there was often a crusty look there. Then it gradually developed into a pretty much constant green discharge. This was worse after exercise, when it would become frothy over her entire nostril.

When you see such physical symptoms, it's hard not to worry about them. I didn't tend to work her that hard when the discharge became constant. During early summer, she had become fit. This had followed a quiet first year of having her – I had taken her shoes off a few months after getting her which meant her going through the transition to barefoot soundness.

This, coupled with the fact she was green when I got her, meant she hadn't been fit before. I was delighted when she was finally galloping around the countryside. But when the discharge got worse she got lethargic, I didn't feel I was able to ask that of her anymore. If she was feeling at all lethargic, I wouldn't push it. It didn't help that this coincided with her losing her summer coat, and growing her winter one, and the really hot weather we had at the time. She was dead on her feet.

In October the vet advised to continue what I was doing, which was boosting her immune system with Echinacea and garlic and making sure she had all the minerals & vitamins she needed. He let me know that if it got worse and I was worried about it then I could just phone up for antibiotics, though they would probably not do much good.

I decided to go down the path of homeopathy as the discharge didn't seem to want to disappear by itself, despite my immune-boosting supplements.

This worked pretty well. After just one treatment, her nose was quite dry. I continued with the homeopathy for 5 weeks. It was very good at keeping the symptoms at bay, but I noticed that if I missed a dosage, then the symptoms would reappear.

It was around this time that I moved Bjork out of the summer field and into a winter one. After a week or so, the grass in that field was eaten down but the next winter field still had long lush grass from the summer. I decided to let all the other horses eat it down a little more before putting Bjork in there, and so I fed her hay for a week in the bare field. I noticed a big resurgence of symptoms, and she even developed a nasty dry cough on exercise. That convinced me that what she had was probably some kind of allergy that made her oversensitive to certain things. It tied in with when the problems first began, when she was in a particularly flowery field, and also the time of year when there was a lot of pesticide spraying, and rape growing in the fields. I had thought of all this earlier, but could never convincingly put it down to that.

The reaction to the hay diet made me look for an allergy-based solution. As I trawled the internet looking for ways to soak hay, or feed haylage, or try and get rid of the symptoms altogether, I stumbled on the Equine Breathing website. I decided not only to try the breathing, but also to take part in the trial. I was recording Bjork's energy levels and symptoms anyway so it wasn't really much effort filling out the survey.

I noticed a profound effect of the 1N breathing on Bjork right from day one.

At first (and I think typically), she wasn't overly impressed with the whole nostril covering thing. Over the next week she got more used to it, and I discovered that doing it with her in the field was far preferable to at the yard. She lives out 24/7 so this made sense. I found Bjork relaxed more and more into it and after a few days seemed to start enjoying it.

There were several big reactions I noticed to the breathing, which I must admit I was surprised at. Firstly, Bjork was really tired and sleepy directly after and wasn't for moving. It would take me 10 minutes to get her out of the field as she stopped every few steps to have a think about whether she wanted to continue moving. I started leaving her to chill out for a bit directly after, and then she would drop her head and stay there for a while or go off and find a nice quiet bit of the field for herself.

Then there were the physical symptoms. Her nasal discharge got really quite nasty, becoming sticky and green and crusty and just horrid. This lasted for about a week or so and then it began to gradually get better, though she then developed a wet cough on exercise. She always coughed to the right, as if trying to dislodge something.

The other main difference I saw in her was her energy level throughout the 2 month period. At first, she was lethargic, but as her symptoms improved, she got more and more sprightly. She is now galloping around the place and doing her Icelandic tolt like mad. She's even striding out more in the walk, which she has never been one for doing. It's just brilliant.

Other changes in Bjork were more subtle. I've noticed an even bigger step up the hierarchy of the herd. She's always been a horse to not take anything from others, but I've now noticed her actively seeking some horses, not in an aggressive way, but letting them know she won't move out their way now.

One incident was very funny. She slowly backed the top gelding into a corner and when he tried to move her as he would normally, she was having none of it. She had a best friend with her, another Icelandic, and you could see he was thinking 'what are we doing?' and slowly tried to move a little away from the top horse in case there was any trouble. But Bjork refused to budge, defiantly with her back to the horse and not letting him move away. His head dropped to the ground and they all stood there for ages. After that, he hasn't tried to hassle her that I've seen.

I've noticed Bjork seems to sweat less when we've been out, and that's with her thick winter coat still. Even when we've been doing a lot of fast work, she still comes back pretty dry. It's hard to remember sometimes what she was like before, but I do remember her back being wet and her chest. Rarely is her back wet now, though her chest still gets damp.

Bjork also seems less stressed. Again, this is difficult to say for sure, but many times when I would bring her in to the yard, it would take her a little while to settle and she would walk around a lot at the end of her lead rope. I always found this quite strange, as she's generally a relaxed horse and she's bombproof to ride. Over the Equine Breathing period, I've found her to be more settled, and even quite sleepy or thoughtful / wistful when we're getting ready. I cut out her hay completely, which I used to give her for something to do while I was pottering around, but she seems to be quite happy without it now.

I haven't had the vet out again specifically for her nasal discharge, but I did have him out for a tetanus booster. He was asking how she'd been and I told him all about the breathing. He seemed genuinely interested, and even finished off my 'science bit' sentence of explaining that increased carbon dioxide levels increase the oxygen available to the cells. I was pleased with his encouragement in the method.



*Ellie and Bjork relax in a 1N session*

I have found Equine Breathing an easy thing to do. I enjoy that quiet time spent with Bjork and love the fact that she really seems to enjoy our sessions. Sometimes it can be difficult to fit all the sessions in, but I have actually welcomed the breathing as something to do on those dark nights after work when you don't feel like much else. It's a great thing for the winter as you know you're doing something positive even though you're not always exercising. I am mostly able to find the space and time to do it.

If someone had said to me 'your horse will be almost over her nasal discharge in 8 weeks time if you just cover her nostrils for 5 minutes each, 3 times a day' I would have been sceptical, and indeed I was. Equine Breathing has had an enormous impact on Bjork. I know that I also stopped giving her hay, but then I didn't give it to her during the summer much either, and her symptoms didn't get better by themselves. I am convinced that the improvements in Bjork are down to the breathing. I still can't quite get my head around it, but all the changes I've seen in her seem to be as a direct result of the breathing. She is now back to her former fitness, but on top of that, she is even more chilled out and just seems happier in herself.

Once Bjork is completely better, I will continue doing the breathing for 10 minutes before exercise and 10 minutes after exercise. I think it has a huge benefit. It's such a nice way to start the day's relationship – rather than putting a head collar on, bringing her in and getting her ready, we're able to spend some quiet time together that we both appreciate. Horses live in the moment and they have these quiet times throughout the day. It's good to be part of the herd in that way. I've always spent good non-riding time with Bjork anyway, like ground work, or just brushing her and doing her hooves, but this adds enormously to that by being a time where we don't do anything.

My relationship with Bjork gets better and better. She is a real friend and I'm delighted that Equine Breathing has brought her back to full health so that we can enjoy going out again and she can live her life free from the discomfort her symptoms brought her.

#### About us

Bjork is purely a pleasure horse and we don't compete at all, preferring to go out and enjoy the countryside. She has a very kind, considerate and willing temperament. She is rock-steady out hacking whilst being forward-going, fun & fast to ride, though like me she is sometimes in a go-slow mood!

She and her field mate live out 24 / 7, with no rugs (obviously - their winter coats are ridiculous!), they are at grass most of the time unless it snows and we need to feed hay. They get little else to eat apart from Bjork gets Formula 4 Feet each day and a little alfalfa & speedi-beet if she's worked, but I don't tend to give this in the summer. They also have no shoes (I do all the barefoot trimming myself and they have excellent hooves, if I do say so myself!). Finally, they are ridden bit-free and tree-free. So we're pretty far down the road to healthy happy horses already.

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## Equine Breathing Trials

If you are interested in taking part in Equine Breathing 1N or Breather trials please contact us. We are trying to build up data on the effect of Equine Breathing on common ailments and behaviour problems. If you, or any friends or colleagues have an equine problem that is anything from mild to life threatening, common or rare, and would like to find out more, do get in touch.

email

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That's it for this month. I hope you find **Horse Breather** interesting. I would love to hear your views so do send an email to [clare@equinebreathing.com](mailto:clare@equinebreathing.com)

till next month, breathe easy!  
Clare

*The contents of this ezine are not a substitute for veterinary advice. If the reader has any concerns they should seek independent professional advice from a vet.*