



Horse Breather

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www.equinebreathing.com

The Nose Net Plus: headshaking, hay fever and more

There are 3 circumstances in which a Nose Net plus can be helpful

1. Used on its own (ie no 1N or Breather) a Nose Net Plus can help some horses to some extent with reduction of hay fever and headshaking symptoms.
2. To help reduce symptoms when riding, in the early days of an Equine Breathing program (1N / Breather use), until the symptoms have disappeared
3. As part of an on-going Equine Breathing program when the owner is not able to do as much 1N or Breather use as is desirable



Let's look at each in more detail.

1. Use of a Nose Net Plus on its own

Ordinary nose nets have been found (see box 1) to help some horses, to varying degrees, in reducing head shaking symptoms. So simply using a nose net is worth trying. A fifth of horses gain full relief from symptoms and if your horse is one of these then that may be a satisfactory option for you.

However, in my view the 'fix' is a temporary one because the underlying over breathing that causes head shaking has not been adequately addressed. The horse has not regained optimal physiology and therefore neither full health nor fitness. As breathing tends to deteriorate over time in any over-breather, I would expect the horse to start headshaking again at some point and maybe to respond less well to a nose net alone.

Manufacturers of nose nets claim that they do not restrict the breathing, but the Equine Breathing Nose Net Plus is specially designed **TO** reduce (ie improve) the breathing by up to 5% (see box 2) . This very low level of training can therefore go on while horse is performing its normal ridden activities and improve the breathing to some extent. But such a mild effect is unlikely to be enough on its own, to regain normal healthy breathing especially where the ridden activity is only in the order of an hour a day.

The aim of an ordinary nose net is to stop headshaking symptoms whereas Equine Breathing has the broader aims to;

- reduce the breathing back to normal levels which
- brings the carbon dioxide up to normal levels which
- enables physiology to function at optimum levels which
- results in full health which means that
- the body is no longer 'irritated' by normal environmental factors such as pollen and dust.

So I would encourage anyone with hay fever or headshaking problems to at least use a Nose Net Plus even if they were unable or unwilling to do a more effective Equine Breathing method. Even if the symptoms do not disappear completely, use of the nose net may help slow the rate of deterioration of the breathing and thus any resulting increase in headshaking severity.

However, 40% of horses gain no relief at all from ordinary nose

1 In a published De Montfort University study more than half of horses showed some improvement in hay fever / headshaking symptoms when using a nose net and a quarter showed complete relief of symptoms.

These results with nose nets were considerably more successful than veterinary treatment or food supplements.

Nevertheless the study also shows that many horses (40%) are not helped by a nose net. Ref; Taylor, K, Cook, S and Mills, DS (2001) The Veterinary Record 150; 311-31.

2 End tidal carbon dioxide measured by use of a capnometer

nets and so obviously, if your horse is one of these then it makes sense to use more effective Equine Breathing methods in addition to the Nose Net Plus. And indeed I would recommend the owner of any headshaker to use Equine Breathing 1N or a Breather in addition to using a Nose Net Plus, even if they do gain relief from the Nose Net Plus.

If a Nose Net Plus fails to relieve headshaking, it doesn't mean it's not working at all, but rather that it cannot reduce the breathing enough on its own to bring it below the trigger point for headshaking. So it's worth continuing to use it while you do Equine Breathing until the symptoms are controlled.

2. Use in Early days of Equine Breathing

People using Equine Breathing report that head shaking symptoms start to diminish fairly quickly, say in a few days or a week or so. The Nose Net Plus can be useful during this period if you wish to ride. It's the Equine Breathing 1N or Breather that is most effective but in these early days before the symptoms abate the Nose Net Plus may just improve the breathing enough whilst in use, to bring it below the trigger point for headshaking.

At some point you will find that the nose net is no longer necessary, and you can stop using it, but it is important that you do not stop the 1N or use of the Breather. The horse's breathing is probably only just good enough to avoid triggering the headshaking response. You should continue Equine Breathing 1N or Breather use until the horse not only has no symptoms but also has fully recovered normal breathing.



Normal breathing at rest is indiscernible. There is no movement of the nostril and no sound can be heard as the horse breathes in and out. It's not possible to tell whether the horse is breathing in or out.

The nostril shape of an over breathing horse is round and open sometimes with thickened edges (see left). The shape of a healthy nostril is more narrow and slit like (see right).



3. Use as part of an Equine Breathing program

There are several different ways of doing Equine Breathing and each is suitable for different management regimes depending on factors such as how much time the owner has, how often they see their horse, their budget, their horse's living conditions and how quickly they want results.

But despite this flexibility, there are bound to be some owners for whom it is difficult to do the amount of Equine Breathing that they and their horse would like. In these cases a Nose Net Plus can be a useful way of doing at least some Equine Breathing.

Indeed a Nose Net Plus can be used even if the Equine Breathing program is a more powerful one. But the rate of healing can only be pushed up so far and if this top rate is achieved 'clearings' might be seen. If necessary the horse should have a day or so off from Equine Breathing including the Nose Net Plus, in the normal way (see training DVD or 1N instructions for details)

One other thing. The horse's symptoms do not have to be hay fever or headshaking. A Nose Net Plus can be used as part of the Equine Breathing program, whatever symptoms the horse has because the aim of Equine Breathing is to regain normal breathing and health rather than to treat specific symptoms.

*The canon: a whirligig tour of the beautiful basics of science p 84

By Natalie Angier

Pollen

It is commonly believed that nose nets work by filtering pollen. Pollen is mostly invisible to the naked eye. About 10,000 pollen grains would fit on a pinhead* which is about the size of the mesh gaps of a nose net. So it doesn't sound like the pollen filtering capability would be very effective – rather like trying to filter peas using a football goal net !

But as we saw earlier the Nose Net Plus does have a small (up to 5% according to my capnometer recordings) reduction on the amount of air breathed and even a small reduction in over breathing has a beneficial effect on physiology which helps reduce symptoms.

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.