

On The Road Again

By John J. Hanover, DVM

For an animal whose survival instinct is “fight or flight,” how unnatural is it for a horse to walk into a small, noisy, unstable, metal box with no escape route? Yet we expect them to walk in to a trailer and travel hundreds of miles while eating, drinking, sleeping, and eliminating in a rolling death trap.

Once they arrive in a new environment they are then expected to perform. This is MAJOR STRESS! When horses are in a “fight or flight” state their gut motility decreases and blood is diverted to muscles to run or fight. This can lead to colic. Stress causes an increase in the chemical cortisol which lowers the immune system function.

Here are some tips to consider that may help your horse deal with traveling:

- Get them used to loading/standing in the trailer at home (hitched). Then start taking frequent short trips with positive reinforcement at the end (cookies).
- Start using products to help the GI tract (probiotics) and the immune system (transfer factors) prior to travel.
- Some vets recommend administering mineral oil before travel to help prevent impactions.
- Bring a supply of hay, feed, and water that the horse is used to.
- Use natural products that don't have negative side effects to help them relax such as essential oils.
- Make rest stops as needed where the horse can safely get out and move around.
- Avoid traveling during the hottest part of the day and be aware of traffic and weather conditions ahead of time.

This tip was brought to you by John J. Hanover, DVM and KAM Animal Services, home of *Cookies with a Clue*, the cookie that's really a supplement with all the ingredients your horse needs to stay happy and healthy. *Booster Bites* is the cookie which helps the immune system and *Stress Busters* will help keep him calm for the journey. Check them out at www.kamanimalservices.com.



All packed, and ready to go.