

Buddy The Horse

February 2, 1020

On Friday, January 22, 2010, Happy Trails picked up a 19 year old Quarter horse by the name of Buddy from a property in Bellville (Richland County), Ohio. The Ohio SPCA requested our help, and the local county humane officer also asked for Happy Trails assistance in this particular case.

Buddy had been underweight for quite some time, and back in December, his sheath began to hang down and had become swollen, a very painful condition for a gelding. This is a condition that we have seen often enough at Happy Trails. If a gelding is suffering from malnutrition, he often does not have the strength or muscle-tone needed to retract his sheath. Gravity takes over, swelling takes place, and because the penis is then unprotected, it can develop a hematoma, become infected, or can swell to an excruciating size.

In Buddy's case, it had been a very long time since he was no longer able to retract. In the middle of single-digit temperatures, his penis had been exposed to the elements. It became swollen and painful. The humane officer involved in the case required that a veterinarian be called in to examine the horse. The vet (this was verified) suggested that the owner apply DMSO to the

already painful appendage. This was definitely not a good call, as DMSO is something that needs to be used with extreme caution, and is not normally applied to sensitive areas such as this. The owner followed these instructions, and Buddy's sheath, which had already become swollen to the size of a bowling ball, now broke out in large, open, burning sores. The family could not afford further treatment, and agreed with the humane officer to surrender the horse to Happy Trails.

Happy Trails picked up Buddy that Friday and headed immediately to OSU in Columbus. He arrived there within an hour and a half of being picked up. During the vet exam they discovered that he had a large portion of scar tissue covering the front of his penis. Buddy was in sad shape — he was severely underweight, he had an eye that he could not see out of that had started to recede back into his head, he was arthritic, and his genitals hurt.

The vet suggested a penile amputation. We normally do not put older horses through major surgeries and didn't have a gut feeling that this was the route to go. He already had enough to deal with, considering that he suffered from



Buddy received a very thorough examination at OSU.



malnutrition and was blind in one eye, so we asked if there was anything else that could be done other than consider surgery or euthanasia.

“You could try daily massage therapy,” came the vet’s reply. *Seriously?* If the massage therapy worked and we could get the swelling to go down, he would be able to retract. The chances weren’t great, but it was an alternative to a painful and very expensive operation.

In the case of malnutrition, often with a proper re-feeding program, a dropped penis will eventually recover and retract if the situation wasn’t too far along. This was definitely not going to be the case for Buddy. His condition had been going on for such a long time that it was currently at a crucial point where the swelling was not subsiding quickly enough on it’s own, and permanent damage was an immediate concern. The staff at OSU fashioned a “sling” of sorts from a dog muzzle to help hold the penis up toward his body to help keep it from freezing. Since this all was happening on a Friday, the good folks at OSU agreed to keep Buddy at the hospital over the weekend to observe him and see what type of therapy he could tolerate. This would give us a few days to figure out what to do with Buddy!

This was a unique problem for us — just when we thought we’d seen and heard it all, we now had to find a cooperative foster home that would be willing to deal with daily massage therapy for a horse that needed a rather painful and delicate area massaged.



If the massage therapy worked and the swelling was eliminated, Buddy would then be able to retract, be much more comfortable, and have a good quality of life. I knew for sure we could help him gain the weight he needed and help him move past his aches and pains of the past. Some joint supplements and a long over-due hoof trim would help him to be more comfortable, and proper nutrition would go a long way to help him feel better. *But where in the world would we find a foster home willing to massage the horse’s genitals several times a day to break up the scar tissue and to promote healthy blood flow to speedup healing?*

As miracles often come out of the blue for Happy Trails, a truly wonderful, caring foster home appeared for the sad and miserable horse. The couple (who will remain nameless to protect their foster home status) even took the time to



Buddy was very cooperative during his examination.

drive down to Columbus to OSU to meet with the vet on Monday, January 25th, to make sure that they would do everything properly for him and to learn about his condition.

I have to say that our foster homes are truly like gold — and many of them are absolutely priceless! This foster family is one such example.

Our animal rescue work would not be remotely possible if it weren't for the caring, compassionate people who assist us with rehab and recovery of these neglected animals.

And it also wouldn't be possible without the generous donations we receive which help pay for our impressive veterinary expenses.

Buddy's total vet bill at OSU came to \$488.17.

That didn't include our gas to haul him to the hospital and then to his foster home, or the expense of his daily grain, hay, dewormers and hoof trims.



Buddy has no sight left in his left eye, but he sees great with his right eye and has no problems whatsoever getting around from a visual perspective.



Specialists were brought in for Buddy's examination. He seemed to still be able to urinate at this point, though a blockage was suspected and there was a narrow area caused by scar tissue.

If you are able to help with Buddy's care and expenses, tax-deductible donations can be sent to:

**Happy Trails (c/o Buddy)
5623 New Milford Rd.
Ravenna, Ohio 44266.**

Donations can also be made on-line through PayPal on our website at www.happytrailsfarm.org.

It's sometimes tough to write about delicate matters such as what Buddy is

experiencing, but it is a very real medical issue which can cause an incredible amount of pain and suffering for the animal involved.

You're support of our rescue efforts is very much appreciated, and on behalf of Buddy, we thank you for helping us to cover his medical expenses — this way we will be able to help the next horse that comes through our rescue program in need of kindness, compassion and vet care!



Buddy stood politely for his examination.