



THE PRODUCT, CARE AND SERVICE GUIDE FOR PEOPLE WHO LOVE HORSES

# HORSE JOURNAL™

VOLUME 16 • NUMBER 2

FEBRUARY 2009

## 3 **We Like Sore No-More Poultice**

*It includes our favorite liniment to cool and soothe.*

## 7 **Silicon Provides Many Benefits**

*But there's no solid reason to pay for it in a supplement.*

## 10 **Solving Soreness In Horses**

*Dougie Hannum uses a common-sense approach.*

## 13 **McNasty And RapLast Taste Icky**

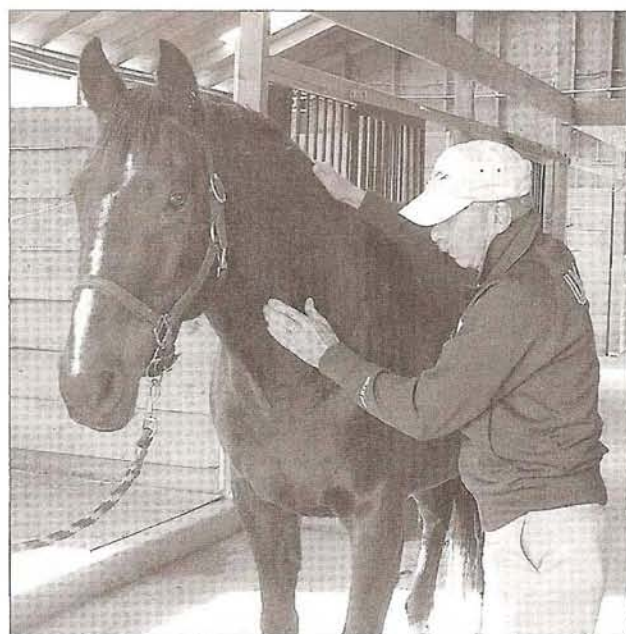
*And that's just what you want to stop wood chewing.*

## 16 **Colonic Ulcer Pain**

*Symptoms include bloating/gas, diarrhea, edema in the legs or belly and more.*



Poultices . . . page 3



Dougie Hannum . . . page 10



Wood chewing . . . page 13

### Also In This Issue

- 2 Editorial: Good Drug, Bad Drug
- 15 Hoof Care Lesson
- 18 Barn Clean-Out Time
- 19 Dr. Anne Zajac On Parasites
- 21 Ask Horse Journal
- 22 Research News
- 23 Letters
- 24 Scratches Treatments

# Sore No-More Poultice Best In 17-Product Field Trial

*Numotizine and Antiphlogistine remain viable choices, while Gateway's Su-Per product line slam dunks as Best Buy selections.*

**P**oulticing has been around as a first-aid measure for probably as long as there's been mud. A plain, old, dirt mud pack is still a great way to instantly soothe things like bee stings. However, as the art of poulticing became more refined, emphasis was placed on a material with a high water-holding capacity—clay.

Poulticing effects are a combination of simple water/hydrotherapy, and the ability of clays to absorb some substances into their structure. As the poultice begins to dry, fluids are wicked from the tissue underneath into the clay. The moist clay is also cooling to the skin surface, and heat from the tissues will equilibrate with the cool temperature of the clay. As the poultice water evaporates, much of the heat goes with it.

A variety of substances are added to poultice clays to "medicate" it. Methyl salicylate, menthol, camphor and peppermint oil enhance the feeling of

coolness, are mildly anesthetic and also mildly counter-irritant. Other counter-irritant ingredients (see our liniments article, January 2009) are also sometimes added. When used on an acutely inflamed leg, these ingredients can aggravate the situation or result in skin reactions when their concentration is high.

Ingredients like boric acid, ferrous sulfate and magnesium sulfate, as well as other mineral salts, will have a drawing and drying effect in addition to that of the clay alone.

## WHY POULTICE

Poultices are useful in several scenarios, each calling for a different type of poultice. For routine use to cool out

hot, tired legs, use either a non-medicated or lightly medicated poultice.

If treating a fresh injury, to control inflammation, avoid medicated poultices that contain counter-irritants, as these ingredients will increase heat in the injured area. For maximum cooling, poultices can be chilled before use and iced water poured over them periodically.

Warmed poultices are best for muscle tension, joints that tend to stiffen up after hard work, old tendon/ligament injuries and for sore feet in winter.

Basically any condition that responds



Horses in heavy work may be candidates for a plain poultice just to help soothe hot, tired legs.

## Consider This . . .

- Non-medicated poultices are best for soothing/cooling inflamed areas, providing moisture to hooves, horses with sensitive skin, and drawing out general swelling.
- Medicated or counter-irritant poultices target aching muscles, chronic injuries, minor sprains/strains, and drawing out bacteria and toxins.
- Plastic will help keep a poultice moist longer, but it will also trap heat, making it the best choice for muscle tension, stiff joints and sore feet. If you're trying to cool a leg and reduce inflammation, use brown paper instead.
- Poultices are only effective when they're wet and will begin to irritate the horse's skin if they dry out too much before they're removed.



Newcomer Sore No-More produced excellent results in our field trial.

# Medicated and Non-Medicated Poultice Products

✓ Horse Journal Editor's Choice  
\$ Horse Journal Best Buy

Product	Our Comments
✓ Antiphlogistine Absorbine www.absorbine.com 800-628-9653 \$34.15/5 lbs.	Medicated: Tan-colored kaolin-based poultice with added glucose, glycerin, boric acid, methyl salicylate, eucalyptus and peppermint oils, salicylic acid. The formula is more sticky/tacky than other poultices so is somewhat more difficult to apply. Using warm water for wetting your hand makes this much easier. Stays moist longer than other poultices. Excellent drawing and tightening effects. Safe to use even on hot, fresh injuries but does not cool out legs as well as plain clays. Great choice for feet because it stays moist and sticks well. Takes more work than most to remove.
Blue Stallion Poultice J M Saddler, Inc. www.jmsaddler.com 800-627-2807 \$10.99/5 lbs.	Medicated: Gray kaolin and bentonite clay-based poultice, with added glycerine, ferrous sulfate, peppermint oil and boric acid. Dries to a reddish-orange color. Texture is easy to work with, not tacky. Holds moisture for 12+ hours. Easy to remove. Mild back of pastern irritation (small red bumps) on one sensitive-skinned horse. Good choice for control of minor swelling and heat related to exercise.
Epsom Salt Poultice Durvet www.durvet.com 800-821-5570 \$10.00/20 oz.	Mildly Medicated: Epsom salt (60%) with methyl salicylate in a jelly-like base. Texture is difficult to work with and leaves a residue when dried, but it's very effective on sore, strained muscles. Use with a wet, hot towel and a covering plastic. Very effective for drawing out hoof abscesses. On lower legs, best used for chronic stiffness in combination with a hot, wet outer wrap and a layer of plastic.
✓ Ice-O-Poultice Hawthorne Products www.hawthorne-products.com 765-768-6585 \$14.10/10 lbs.	Non-Irritating: Blend of bentonite and kaolin clays with 3.44% Borax and low levels of acetic acid and zinc (skin conditioners). Good texture, easy to apply. Can be a little tacky to remove if it hasn't dried completely. Excellent choice for horses with sensitive skin or acute injuries. Definitely speeds cooling out of hot legs after heavy work. Brightens white legs as a bonus.
Like Ice Equine America www.equine-america.com 800-628-9653 \$15.35/7.5 lbs.	Medicated: Kaolin and bentonite clay base with boric acid, ferrous sulfate, aloe and tea tree oil. Fairly easy to work with. Rinsed off easily if not allowed to dry out. Relieved minor leg swelling in horses in heavy work. Caused some mild skin irritation when used over a swollen, hot fetlock on a horse with synovitis (this is always a risk with medicated poultices).
Mineral Mud Pack Poultice Americas Acres Safety Products www.americasacres.com 888-250-5151 \$29.99/24 oz.	Mildly Medicated: "Dead Sea Black Mud" with 21 unspecified added minerals. Easy-to-work with mud consistency. Dark gray mud with essentially no odor. Eased the pain of stinging soles. Legs cooled out quicker with this mud after a workout than when nothing was used, but it dries out quickly. Temporarily cooled a hot arthritic joint but no obvious pain relief from it.
✓ Numotzine Cataplasm Hobart Laboratories www.numotzine.com 218-751-9505 \$25.06/24 oz.	Medicated: Old-fashioned formula originally created for relief of chest pain and congestion when used as a topical "plaster." Clay base contains zinc, guaiacol, beechwood, methyl salicylate and creosote. Premixed, pink, highly aromatic. Goes on and washes off very easily. No irritation noted even on a horse with skin breaks from cactus needles. Very effective at reducing swelling and pain. Draws edema extremely well. Also an excellent choice for hoof abscesses. Quickly cleared up a mild case of canker (frog infection) in a draft horse and provided immediate pain relief.
✓ Pull Tight Uckele Health and Nutrition www.uckele.com 800-248-0330 \$24.95/10 lbs.	Mildly Medicated: Classic clay poultice with oil of wintergreen, witch hazel, spirit of camphor. Just the right amount of glycerin in the base makes it easy to apply and remove. Adheres well. Nondrying. Used on a horse after a heavy work. Compared to the opposite leg wrapped with a plain water wrap, there was an obviously superior cooling effect at four hours. Prevented after-work swelling in a horse with an old tendon injury. Extremely easy to rinse off. Holds moisture well overnight.
✓ Sore No-More Poultice Equilite Inc. www.equilite.com 800-942-5483 \$15.95/5 lbs.	Mildly Medicated: Silky clay poultice that is one-third Sore No-More liniment by weight. Very easy to work with and remove. Distinctive pleasant Sore No-More aroma. Heavy-duty pampering after hard works and a good companion product to Sore No-More liniment. We worked on a horse with an acute fetlock twisting injury (uneven ground when playing at pasture). The horse was limping, fetlock and tendon beginning to swell shortly afterward. The leg was rubbed down with Sore No-More hourly, ice bandaged throughout the day and done up with Sore No-More poultice overnight. By the next morning, the swelling was 85% reduced, horse walking comfortably. Liniment was applied several times the next day, poultice again repeated. By the third day, all swelling was gone and horse started hand walking. Back in work within a week. Also used on a horse stocked up from a puncture wound. Took the swelling out with one application when other approaches had failed.
✓ \$ Su-Per Kool-N-Tite Gateway Products www.buygpdirect.com 888-474-6367 \$6.25/5 lbs.	Medicated: Kaolin base with iron subsulfite, propylene glycol, glycerin, calcium carbonate, copper sulfate, boric acid, calcium propionate, wintergreen oil, eucalyptus oil, peppermint oil, menthol, thymol, magnesium, benzoin. Highly aromatic, heavily medicated. This product is like a liniment in poultice form. Warmed up and used under plastic it makes a soothing treatment for stiff joints, sore feet, chronic lower-limb problems. Use with caution on horses with sensitive skin (do 24-hour spot test first). Avoid use over acutely inflamed areas.
Su-Per Magnapaste Gateway Products www.buygpdirect.com 888-474-6367 \$6.80/16 oz.	Mildly Medicated: Epsom salts (60%) and methyl salicylate in a water soluble gel base. Very gritty, with a consistency like jam. Great for use under a wet, hot towel and plastic cover for sore backs (20- to 60-minute treatment). Not as much drawing power for lower leg swelling as clay poultices. Good choice for packing hooves to encourage abscesses to exit. Forms a crust on the skin if allowed to dry.

Product	Our Comments
Su-Per Polar Tite Gateway Products www.buygpdirect.com 888-474-6367 \$6.28/5 lbs.	Medicated: Kaolin-based poultice, with magnesium sulfate, vinegar, camphor powder, wintergreen oil, oil of eucalyptus. Pronounced cooling sensation with this one but fairly strong counter-irritant effect. Good choice for horses that have old injuries and tend to stock up when worked. Easy texture to work with. Rinses off well. Dries out quickly, which hampers the drawing effect.
Su-Per Poultice Gateway Products www.buygpdirect.com 888-474-6367 \$6.08/5 lbs.	Medicated: Kaolin clay with calcium carbonate, glycerin, magnesium sulfate, alum, methyl salicylate and oil of eucalyptus. Easy to work with but dries very quickly so we suggest you use a thick layer, work fast and keep a pail of water handy. The rapid drying also hampered the drawing effect of this poultice. We needed to add water every few hours to preserve the cooling and tightening effects.
✓\$ Su-Per Tite-N-Up Gateway Products www.buygpdirect.com 888-474-6367 \$5.72/5 lbs.	Non-Irritating. Montmorillonite clay with borax. This is a nice, non-medicated poultice with a very smooth, silky texture. Holds its moisture very well. Good choice for fresh sprains and injuries. Perfect for horses with sensitive skin. Cools out hot legs very well. Takes a little more effort to remove if it hasn't completely dried but worth it for the effect. Also brightens white legs.
Super H Antiseptic Powder and Poultice Bickmore www.bickmore.com 800-356-8804 \$9.99/5 lbs. premixed \$7.15/3.5 lbs. dry powder	Medicated: Traditional clay poultice product with boric acid, natural oils and mild antiseptic/counter-irritant effects from menthol. Available premixed or as a powder. Premixed product is a little tacky and difficult to get off, but if you use the powder and mix your own you can add a little glycerin or mineral oil to get a smoother consistency. Soothing all-purpose poultice. Cools out hot legs nicely. Tends to be drying to the skin and dries out quicker than most other products. Dry powder is also suggested for use on wounds as antiseptic and to stop bleeding, but we think there are less-irritating ways to treat wounds. Could be useful on granulating wounds in the lower leg, to control proud flesh, or in initial treatment of heavily contaminated and infected old wounds.
✓ Uptite Uptite Company 978-683-7396 \$7.20/4.4 lbs.	Non-Irritating: One of the few nonmedicated poultices still available. Kaolin/montmorillonite base with borax. Very easy to apply. Silky texture from a good blend of clays. Won't irritate even sensitive horses. Safe for fresh injuries and inflamed skin. Stays moist for a prolonged period. Excellent drawing and cooling effects on hot, irritated joints and lower legs. Brightens and removes stains from white legs.
Wonder Wrap Calm Coat Products www.calmcoat.com 888-396-0004 \$15.95/8 oz.	Mildly Medicated: Herbal powder of peppermint, lavender, juniper and yarrow. Herbs with mildly astringent and/or mildly anti-inflammatory effects. Directions say to mix with water to make a paste. Mixes easily but the paste does not adhere well. Should be applied to the cloth that comes with the product, or other bandaging material, rather than directly to the leg. We found it will stain your hands if not promptly washed off, and it stains white legs. Not effective on an early case of pastern irritation/scratches, or leg swelling from encounter with a cactus. Good idea, but it needs work.

well to a counterirritant liniment can get a prolonged liniment effect from a warmed poultice. Warmed plain or medicated poultices also draw out hoof abscesses quicker. These poultices can be refreshed by adding warm water periodically.

Many people like to use poultices proactively after hard works, even if the horse does not have any particular problem. Use plain poultice if your primary goal is to cool down the legs, or medicated for liniment-like effects.

Poultices can also soothe skin irritations from insect bites or stings. Use plain or only lightly medicated and nondrying poultice for this. Heavily medicated poultices may be too irritating. They will also protect from sun and further insect assault. You also need to be careful to gently wash off the poultice before it dries when using over irritated skin.

### HOW TO APPLY

It takes a little practice to master the art, but anyone can learn how to apply a poultice. You will need the poultice, brown paper or plastic wrap

(see sidebar) to go over the poultice, an inner quilt/cotton bandage and an outer wrap.

If you're using paper instead of plastic, roll the paper up and allow it to soak in the water while you work. Start by wetting the horse's leg. To keep poultice from building up on your hands, try rubbing them with a little oil or glycerin, or spray your palms with a baking spray. (That's optional, of course, but it can really help.)

Keep a small bucket of water close by and wet your hands frequently. This makes it easier to mold the poultice and apply it evenly. Apply a layer of from 3/8 to 7/8 inches thick. Cover this with the wet brown paper or plastic, then apply the bandage and wrap as usual.

### POULTICE ON THE ROAD

The time your horse is most likely to benefit from poulticing, after a long hard day away from home, is also always going to

be the time when you least feel like hassling with it. Good owner that you are, we know you will anyway. These are some ideas for making travel a little easier:

**Poultice roll-ups.** Before leaving home, lay out your brown paper outer wrap for poultice and apply the poultice to this in the desired thickness. The feed bag liners are ideal for this since they won't fall apart. Cut the paper to a width that will wrap around your horse's leg with about a 1- to 2-inch overlap. Do not apply poultice to the overlap. Do not moisten the paper



The classic products Numotzine and Antiphlogistine perform as well today as ever.



**Make your own pre-packaged poultice for travel by placing poultice in a plastic bag, then apply it right from the bag.**

before applying the poultice. When done applying the poultice, roll it up like a jelly roll, leaving the overlap free as a tab and store inside a large self-sealing plastic bag, like Ziploc. Force as much air as possible out of the bag. If bringing an ice chest, keep the bag in there for extra cooling effect. To use, place the roll on a flat area, hold it securely by the overlap and unroll.

**Cut and apply poultice.** Plastic bags can also be used for one step poultice and plastic applications. Choose a size that matches your horse's cannon bone length (or use two sandwich-size bags per leg). Put a ball of poultice into the bag, one bag per leg. When ready to apply, simply spread out the poultice inside the closed bag then use scissors to remove the top and one side of the bag. Apply to leg. The quick-apply, ready-to-use poultice bags are also good to keep on hand in the barn refrigerator.

### REMOVING POULTICE

Bandages should always be removed before a poultice has completely dried out to avoid drying and irritating the skin. However, a poultice that is still a little wet is more difficult to remove than one that has completely dried. You may be able to brush off the dried poultice. Otherwise, use a sprayer attached to a hose (warm water ideal, but cold will work) and spray it off.

You can also use the scrubber side of a combination scouring/sponge for

washing dishes to remove the poultice more quickly, but be careful not to irritate the skin.

### BOTTOM LINE

As with liniments, we used poultices both as a routine/preventative after work and also for specific problems. There is a wide variety to choose from. The ideal one for you will depend on your specific needs.

**If you only use poultices for acute leg problems like tendon or ligament issues, you will want either an unmedicated poultice or newcomer Sore No-More Poultice, our No. 1 choice in poultices.** Sore No-More costs more than a plain poultice product, but it did a great job on a test horse with a sprain injury.

The three unmedicated poultices in our trial (i.e. no irritating ingredients) were Ice-O-Poultice, Uptite and Su-Per Tite-N-Up. They performed virtually the same, with Su-Per Tite-N-Up the unmedicated Best Buy.

For routine use after heavy works, select either one of these three plain poultices or one that's mildly medicated, such as Uckele's Pull Tight. This



**Gateway Products' Su-Per poultices earned Best Buy.**

poultice cooled rapidly and also had a good preventative effect against post work swelling.

If you only use poultice for drawing out hoof abscesses, you can't beat Numotizine, our previous top poultice pick (August 2004). It's a little more expensive but has very powerful drawing effects, won't dry out under plastic, relieves pain and is antimicrobial.

For treating or preventing stiffness in old injuries or joints, and relieving muscle spasm, medicated poultices are perfect. You can even use them instead of a liniment rub down, if you prefer. Absorbine Antiphlogistine, a 2004 recommended product, is our standout for performance and long-lasting effect in medicated poultices. Best buy is Su-Per Kool-N-Tite, although it may be too strong for some horses. Su-Per Polar-Tite is runner-up with its lower potential for skin irritation, although it dries out fairly quickly. Be sure to use a thick layer and refresh it with warm water if leaving on overnight. **[E]**

*Horse Journal Staff Article.*

## Paper Or Plastic?

Plastic as the layer between the actual poultice and the cotton bandage holds the moisture in the poultice better than paper, but it also traps heat. If you are after a counter-irritant, liniment-like effect, use plastic.

If you're trying to cool a leg, we recommend you use heavy brown paper as that layer or use nothing but the poultice on the horse's leg. (Warning: Using no paper or plastic layer can be messy.) As the poultice dries, you can remove it and apply fresh.

The inside paper liner from feed bags can be peeled away from the outer bag and is perfect for poulticing because it's paper on one side and a moisture-resistant material, like waxed paper, on the other. Put the sealed side to the outside to preserve moisture in the poultice longer. Even the woven feed bags can be put used with poultice, too if you'd like. They make a good layer between the poultice and a cotton bandage on hot legs because they breathe better and don't trap as much heat as a layer of plastic or paper.