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RUPTURE IN THE FOAL

How to Deal With Umbilical
Scrotal Hernias.

How Rupture Is Caused—Umbilical
Hernia Not Usually Serious—
Treatment of Scrotal Hernia
Essentially a Surgical Operation.

(Contributed by Ontario Department of
Agriculture, Toronto.)

The term Hernia, or Rupture, is applied to designate a condition consisting of the protrusion of a portion of the intestine or bowel from the abdominal cavity through a normal or abnormal aperture of the abdominal wall, which protrusion shows its presence by a lump or tumor-like mass, with the skin remaining intact as a covering or enclosing sac.

Umbilical Hernia.

In the case of Umbilical Hernia or rupture at the navel, the condition generally appears within a few weeks after birth. It consists of the protrusion of a portion of the bowel through the navel opening in the floor of the belly, the skin remaining intact, forming a covering sac or pouch. Its presence becomes noticeable by the appearance of a round soft lump, or tumor like mass at the navel. Should doubt exist as to whether the condition is actually one of rupture, its true nature can be readily determined by placing the foal on its back and by pressing and manipulating the lump with the hand. It will be found that the bowel can be returned to the abdomen, leaving a somewhat loose pouch of skin, and the aperture by which the bowel protruded can be felt as an oblong or ring like opening, thus distinguishing it from any other swelling. As soon, however, as the foal is allowed to regain its feet, the bowel once more protrudes into the sac of skin and the lump or tumor like mass again appears at the navel. The size of the rupture varies from that of an egg to a large-sized ball.

Treatment.—As a rule, rupture at the navel in foals is not a serious condition, except when of large size. Those of small size tend to disappear in a large number of cases with growth and development of the animal. Recovery can be assisted by means of a truss or supporting bandage. The foal should first be placed on its back, and the lump or tumor manipulated with the hand to return the protruding bowel into the abdomen. To prevent the bowel from again escaping, a pad or small cushion is placed over the navel opening and retained in position by a truss or supporting bandage, such as a leather band or canvas girth encircling the body, fastened up over the back, and prevented from slipping forward or backward by means of a breast band and breech band. The only objection to the use of a truss or bandage is, that it may chafe the skin if not properly applied. In the case of small ruptures, a good blister applied to the skin around the navel has a good effect, as the swelling which it causes helps to close the opening and prevents the bowel from again escaping.

If the foal reaches the age of four or five months without showing any improvement, and the rupture tends to enlarge instead of decrease, it may require an operation to overcome it. The most common methods of operation are by means of wooden clamps, skewers, and ligatures. In applying these, the foal must be placed on its back, and care taken to have the bowel contents of the rupture sac returned to the abdomen. The skin forming the pouch or sac should then be grasped by the hand and drawn out as far as possible from the body, and the clamps or ligature fixed tightly and securely over the skin, close up against the navel ring or opening. The clamps or ligatures are then allowed to remain in position until they slough and fall off together with the imprisoned skin and tissues.

Scrotal Hernia in Colts.

Scrotal Hernia, or rupture at the scrotum, affects male animals only, and may be present at time of birth, or appear within a few weeks thereafter. This form of rupture consists of the protrusion of a portion of the bowel into the scrotum or bag, together with the testicles. Its presence is noticeable by the increased size of the scrotum.

Treatment.—The treatment of Scrotal Hernia in ordinary colts consists essentially of a surgical operation, the method usually followed being castration by what is known as the covered operation, which should be undertaken only by the veterinary surgeon. As a rule colts intended for work purposes, affected with this form of rupture, should be operated on early in life, and in most cases before the animal is much over one year old, as the chances of successful results decrease with age, while, in the case of foals and yearlings, the operation is invariably successful.

In the case of pure-bred colts, valuable for breeding purposes, surgical interference is warranted only when the hernia is a source of danger to health. The best plan in such cases is to allow nature to take its course in the hope that with growth and development of the animal the hernia will become reduced.—Dr. C. D. McGilvray, President Ont. Vet. College, Guelph.

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