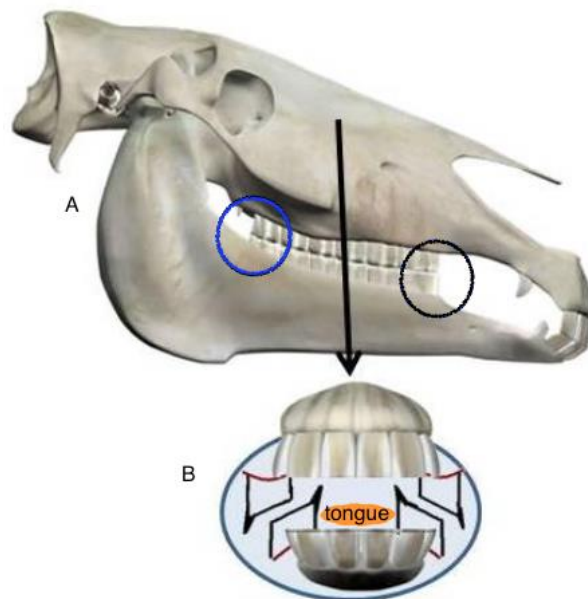


CENTENNIAL PARK VETERINARY PRACTICE



A few tips in regards to equine dentistry on the playing polo horse

The equine upper and lower jaw and are slightly different in sizes (width and also length) this means that there is no perfect alignment amongst upper and lower teeth. Horse teeth grow continuously, and sharp edges and hooks occur in the areas that there is no wear and tear.



Notes: The circles in picture A show the areas that commonly develop hooks, the picture B shows the areas that become sharp.

In the game of polo, the critical moments when you reduce speed and stop are crucial maneuvers, and the gag will move upwards and downwards on the mouth up to the first premolars (graphic A black circle) if there is any sharpness around the area, tongue and cheeks will be pinched and probably lacerated.

What are the common symptoms?

Horses that shake their head, over-react (are over sensitive), pull or put their heads down while playing the game when asked to reduce speed or stop are probably in need of dental work .

How often should horse teeth be treated?

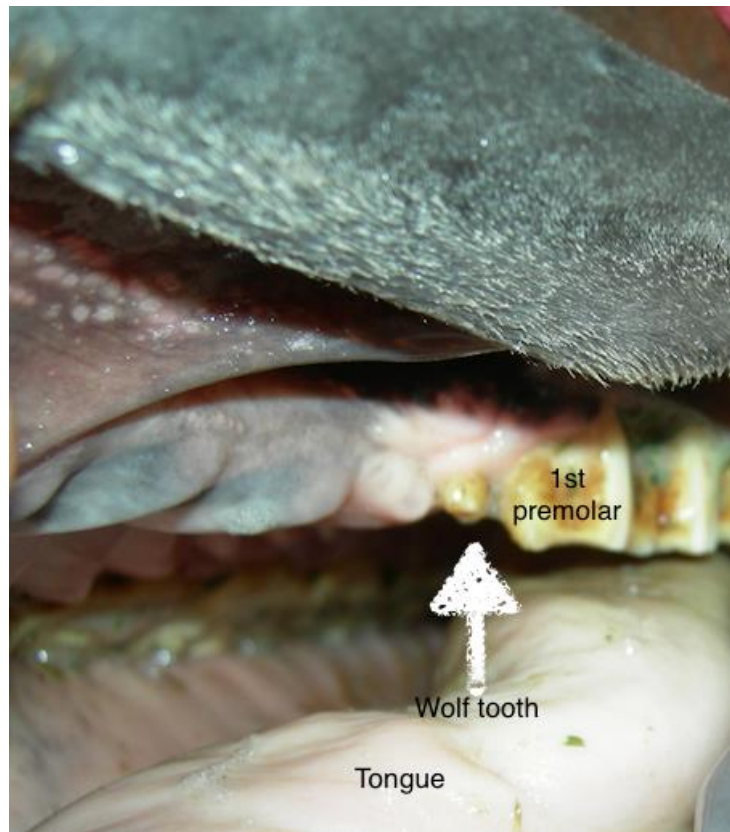
Horses during the first 5 years will be changing their dental profile, therefore dental check-ups should be more regular (every 4-5 months), but older horses should be checked at least once a year. I would recommend to get all dental work done before the polo season starts in order to minimize preventable trauma to the mouth.

CENTENNIAL PARK VETERINARY PRACTICE



The wolf tooth

The wolf tooth is a small tooth that grows next to the first upper premolar, it can be present on one side or both sides of the upper jaw. Many horse don't have a wolf tooth but others may. The wolf tooth has very shallow roots which are not attached to the main jaw bone (maxilar). When the polo bit touches this shallow rooted tooth it causes movement in the tooth creating a local inflammation on the gums (*gingivitis*) which is painful for the horse.



What to do?

Ask your local vet or equine dental technician to remove the wolf tooth, which is a simple procedure.

Churo Pellegrini M.V.

Mob: 0488239087

Email: churo.pellegrini@equinevet.com.au