

# Cinder Hill Equine Clinic



## Applying Foot Poultices

The most common reason for very severe lameness in horses is a solar abscess or “pus in the foot”. This is most common after wet weather when the bottom of the foot becomes softer and more likely to be hurt. It is important to get your vet to examine any lame horse even if you suspect that pus in the foot is the problem as they will be able to rule out other possible causes of lameness, provide some pain relief, and potentially help the pus to drain.

The aim of foot poultices is to soften the bottom of the foot again so that any infection will follow the easiest direction for escape and break out through the bottom of the hoof instead of tracking upwards where it can be more problematic.

You will need the following things to apply a foot poultice:

- A Dressing - Animalintex is designed for use in hoof abscesses.
  - A cushioning layer - A material like soffban or orthoband can be useful and easier to apply than cotton wool.
  - A nappy is easy to apply over these layers and can hold everything together
  - A Holding layer such as Vetwrap
  - “Duck” tape - create a square of this to apply to the bottom of the foot by sticking strips of tape together, apply the strips in different directions to make a thicker square of tape. This will make your poultice more waterproof and longer lasting
  - Adhesive bandage – such as e-band or Elastoplast
1. Use water to clean the hoof if this has not already been done.
  2. Cover your dressing in hot water and allow it to cool until it is comfortable for you to hold. Squeeze the excess water out before applying it to the foot. The dressing can be applied dry once discharge starts to come out of the foot.
  3. Use the cushioning layer to hold the dressing onto the foot. A figure of eight pattern around the foot can allow you to cover the whole hoof more easily. Not much cushioning is required but make sure you cover the coronary band (top of the hoof) and the heels.
  4. Pull a nappy over these layers.
  5. Apply vet wrap over the top, using a figure of 8 pattern as before. Leave an inch of cushioning material at the top of your bandage.
  6. Stick your tape square to the bottom of your horse’s foot.
  7. Secure the edges of the tape square and the top of the bandage with adhesive bandage.