**Poultice/Wound Care Preparation**

Finally, we come to any and all medications that might be applied to speed healing. Here again, a huge variety of options are available, depending on what you hope to accomplish. It is a good idea to consult with your veterinarian before deciding on any course of treatment that includes this step in the process, as veterinarians are generally educated about the latest and most effective treatments available.

To give you an idea of what might be used, we'll start with a poultice. A poultice is used on horses to relieve inflammation. It usually targets treatment on tendons. Poultices are used for several reasons. Sometimes, they are applied to prevent heat and filling after hard work, such as after a race or cross country ride. They are also used to treat wounds and abscesses, by helping draw out a pus buildup or abscess.

Poultices can be heated and placed on an area where you want to increase circulation. A hot poultice increases circulation, a cold poultice decreases inflammation. Many horse owners use a "sweating" poultice to reduce fluid buildup; these poultices commonly include ingredients such as DMSO (dimethyl sulfoxide), nitrofurazone, petroleum jelly, glycerin, Epsom salts, and/or mineral oil.

A wide variety of commercial preparations is available, or poultices can be homemade. If you make your own, it is important to dilute agents such as DMSO, as they can cause skin damage.

When using a poultice with a bandage, first, the poultice is applied, then a layer of underwrap such as soaked brown paper bags and/or a layer of plastic wrap, followed by an overlayer of soft padded dressing, and, finally, the bandage. Please note there are specific instructions on how to apply a sweat bandage and other bandage types available from the AAEP ([www.aaep.org](http://www.aaep.org/)).

There are many commercial products marketed as wound "dressings" (more sources of confusion). The science in this area has really expanded from the days of applying bran mash or honey to a wound. Many of today's topicals have been proven to significantly speed healing and reduce scarring. There is even a prototype hydrogel wound dressing being developed in England with the secretions of maggot larva that will destroy dead tissue in nonhealing wounds. That is an old trick given a new life! Consult your veterinarian if your horse has a wound that needs bandaging.

Reference: <http://www.thehorse.com/articles/18918/bandaging-horses>