**The Dressing**

Dressings (or paddings), for the purposes of this discussion, are of two types of material and are not to be confused with many commercially available wound care topicals, which are also called dressings.

Dressings used under bandages are applied for support and protection. The object is to provide a protective layer of padding to avoid irritation caused by the elastic bandaging material. Many horse owners still use the tried-and-true flannel or cotton leg quilts, as they provide padding and soft support on a horse's legs and are reusable. Sheet cotton or rolled cotton is also commonly used for this purpose. There are many pre-made supplies available for purchase that can be used for the dressing or padding portion of the entire bandage.

The second type of dressing is a piece of material that is used to cover a wound or stop bleeding. An ideal wound dressing is one that is sterile, breathable, and encourages a moist healing environment. This will reduce the risk of infection, help the wound heal more quickly, and reduce scarring.

The materials available for dressing wounds have come a long way over the years. Gone are the days when you had to use plain cotton or gauze to cover a wound that meant washing or picking the pieces of material out of the healing wound (delaying wound closure). These days, highly absorbent materials with a barrier to prevent adhesion to the wound are readily available. In a pinch, diapers provide excellent absorbency as a wound dressing.

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