***Complications and possible side-effects:***

The success rate of a neurectomy varies because nerve branching is unpredictable. Approximately 20 percent of horses do not completely respond to the surgery because small ancillary nerve fibers may not be removed. Additionally, after the horse has been nerved, various problems could occur outside of the formation of neuromas, such as **tripping**. This is seen in about 30 percent of the cases, but it’s uncertain if the stumbling is a result of the neurectomy or the underlying cause that necessitated the surgery in the first place.

One potential side effect of the neurectomy is the formation of **neuromas**, a disorganized mass of nerve tissue that occurs at the upper end of the nerve stump. These neuromas can cause the horse more pain than the original navicular syndrome. In an effort to limit neuromas, the nerve ends may be injected with cortisone three weeks after surgery. Another way surgeons attempt to thwart neuromas is by doing a “capping” procedure. After the nerves are cut, the epineurium, the tissue around the outside of the nerve, is pulled around the end of the nerve, forming a cap.

Another potential side effect is **damage to tendons or ligaments of the involved legs**. Because horses feel better, they will begin to move out more, stressing the tendons and ligaments that have not been used as much when the horse was in pain. Because of this danger, horses should be brought back slowly to allow them ample time to rebuild and strengthen tissues that are now under different mechanical stresses.

Finally, the **formation of excessive scar tissue** can lead to a **decreased blood supply to the hoof**, which could lead to **laminitis**, or, in rare cases, **sloughing of the hoof**. Following such a procedure, close attention must be paid to the horse’s feet because the horse now can’t feel a bruise, abscess or foreign object in the nerved area. The foot needs to be cleaned and examined daily because **thrush** can also present a problem.

There is also a risk that the nerves will **regenerate** within two to five years, and the horse will feel pain again. However, it is also believed that feeling returns because the accessory nerves that branch off of the palmar digital trunk increase in activity until they are able to transmit sensations.