

Arthroscopy (Keyhole surgery)



Arthroscopy (commonly known as keyhole surgery) has been available since the 1980s for the treatment of joint injuries in humans, horses and occasionally dogs. The procedure allows the examination and treatment of many joint and tendon canal injuries whilst causing minimal trauma during the procedure itself. Patients generally recover relatively quickly following keyhole surgery with little scarring and low risks of wound complications.

How does arthroscopy work?

Keyhole surgery is normally carried out under general anaesthesia. The patient is positioned on the operating table on their side or back and the surgical site clipped, scrubbed and draped.

The joint or tendon canal is inflated with sterile solution and the camera is inserted through a small skin incision, directly into the area of interest. Separate instrument portals are made to allow for the removal of injured or abnormal tissue. Upon completion of the procedure, the joint or tendon canal is flushed, the small skin incisions are sutured or stapled and a light dressing applied.



A METALLIC PROBE CAN BE SEEN WITHIN THE JOINT IN THE ABOVE IMAGE, BEING USED TO IDENTIFY AN AREA OF DAMAGED CARTILAGE, PRIOR TO REMOVAL OF THE TISSUE WITH FORCEPS.

INDICATIONS FOR ARTHROSCOPY:

- removal of joint chip fractures;
- removal of OCD joint fragments in young adult horses;
- flushing wounds involving joints and tendon canals, including removing foreign bodies;
- treatment of certain tendon and ligament injuries inside tendon canals;
- treating certain bone cysts;
- assessing and treating joint trauma;
- visualisation during the repair of certain joint fractures.

KEY POINTS ARTHROSCOPY:

- is a common surgical technique for treating joint and tendon canal injuries;
- is most often used to treat fetlock, hock, stifle and knee (carpus) injuries;
- allows the removal of damaged tissue without further joint or tendon injury;
- allows flushing of large fluid volumes when treating joint and tendon sheath infections;
- results in small surgical wounds, often allowing a relatively quick return to exercise.

Pre-breeding Veterinary Examination

Ask your vet to carry out a pre-breeding examination on your mare to assess her suitability for breeding and to highlight any possible fertility issues. Finding out this information at an early stage can prevent the expense and disappointment of trying to breed from a subfertile mare. This examination is best performed in stocks or under sedation if the mare is a maiden.

The examination will usually include:

- examination of the conformation of the vulva;
- examination of the vagina and cervix using a speculum;
- ultrasound examination of the uterus and ovaries carried out internally through the rectum.

Based on this examination your vet may suggest some treatment prior to or during breeding or pregnancy to improve the chances of her successfully conceiving and carrying a foal.

Pre-breeding health tests can also be carried out at this time.

You will need to check the requirements of the individual stud or AI centre.

Pre-breeding health tests:

- clitoral swab for Contagious Equine Metritis (CEM): the culture takes at least 7 days so you need to plan ahead;
- blood test for Equine Viral Arteritis (EVA);
- other test as requested e.g. uterine swab, strangles blood test.



**ULTRASOUND EXAMINATION
OF THE UTERUS**



**SPECULUM
EXAMINATION OF THE CERVIX**

KEY POINTS

- Older, overweight and maiden mares are more difficult to breed from.
- Your mare should be in good general health and be up date with foot care, vaccination and worming.
- Plan ahead and find out about the stud's health test requirements.
- Ask your vet to carry out a pre-breeding examination.



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