

# Wave of the Future

Equine patients can now benefit from the latest technology in treating soft tissue injuries thanks to new equipment at the CVHS's large animal clinic and the expertise of the equine section led by **Dr. H. David Moll**, professor and chief of equine surgery.

Using a private donation to the sports medicine program and matching funds from the CVHS, the equine section has purchased a Storz Medical Duolith SD1, the first combination shockwave therapy system produced. This state-of-the-art shockwave therapy unit is virtually noiseless, unlike older shockwave systems. Only a mild clicking sound is heard while the horse is being treated. Treatments usually require no more than 15 minutes per site.

**Extracorporeal shockwave therapy (ESWT)**, which applies high pressure waves to the affected tissue in a site-specific manner, has recently been introduced into equine practice as a treatment for musculoskeletal injuries in horses. While ESWT is new to the equine field, it has been used on humans more than 20 years to disintegrate kidney

stones and to treat stress fractures, tennis elbow, heel spurs and non-union fractures.

Shockwave therapy uses pressure waves that travel through fluid and soft tissue. Their effects occur where there is a change in the interface of different tissues. Then the energy contained in the shockwaves is released and interacts with the tissue to relieve pain and accelerate healing. Because there appears to be an anesthetic effect, there is a risk to the horse (and rider) if the horse returns to normal activity before the injury is healed.

Even though arthritis is incurable, ESWT may be capable of extending the usefulness of an animal. Tendon and ligament conditions must be given ample time for proper healing and follow-up ultrasonography is necessary to assess healing. Before shockwave therapy is recommended, a thorough work-up is required on all patients.

These conditions may benefit from shockwave therapy:

- Suspensory desmitis
- Bowed tendons
- Bucked shins
- Stable stress fractures
- Back pain
- Sacroiliac pain
- Splints (interosseus ligament tears)
- Splint bone fractures
- Ring bone
- Bone spavin
- Caudal heel pain (Navicular syndrome)
- Curb (plantar tarsal ligament desmitis) 🐾

