

Hooray for Hoof Drainage!

By **Cindy Hale**

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Never in my life did I ever think I'd be so happy to witness an oozing infection. But that's how I felt yesterday when Jennifer, my vet, took a paring knife to the sole of Wally's sore hoof. She'd reviewed the xrays and then used the hoof testers to pinpoint the precise spot to begin her excavation in order to open up the abscess in Wally's sole.

She didn't have to dig far.

After just two or three dips and pokes with the tip of her knife, an eruption of the foulest black goo bubbled to the surface. I could smell it from three feet away. The force with which it oozed was evidence of how much pressure had built up inside Wally's hoof. Stuck inside the confines of the hoof wall, the infected material-- primarily old blood that had collected from a severe bruise-- had no place to go. So it had just sat there and brewed for a couple of weeks.

Of course, immediately after the carving caper, Wally was even more sore. But Jennifer packed the incised area and wrapped his foot.

I must admit, today Wally is already walking better! He seemed to feel healthier, too. My sister, Jill, told me that Wally had been prancing and dancing inside his big covered stall all morning.

I've been doing some dancing myself. This is all such a relief! I'm still keeping my fingers crossed, but it looks like Wally is on his way to recovering from The Abscess From Hell. When the day finally comes that he gets his shoe back on and I'm able to saddle him up for a ride, I should hold a party. But what exactly does one wear to a Farewell to the Abscess shindig? The wardrobe would have to include plastic gloves and Vetrap. And what on earth would we have for food? One of those chocolate volcano cakes, where fudge trickles down the sides of the cake, somehow seems appropriate. Party favors are an easy choice: hoof picks.

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