

**Red Hat Chiropractic**  
*For Horse & Rider*

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Dr. Louise Cash, DC, CAC is certified by the AVCA (American Veterinary Chiropractic Association) to adjust horses and other animals. Her interest lies in caring for your horse's chiropractic needs and believes your animal's Veterinarian is for the primary care of your animal. Dr. Louise does not diagnose anything but subluxation complex (misalignment of joints and will work on an animal ONLY if it is under the care of a Veterinarian. Dr. Louise will also be in contact with your Vet in regards to what she finds with your animal. This is to make certain that your animal is receiving the BEST complementary care that is available and that nothing is overlooked.

***Maximum Potential***

The balance & grace of the horse and rider has much to do with the health of each of their nerve systems. As a chiropractor I adjust horses & riders to help them attain maximum potential as a riding unit. Receiving Chiropractic adjustments helps the body self-lubricate, self-adjust, self-regulate its systems and power. Power is then used for forward movement and lift or suspension instead of resistance and difficulty with balance.

***Who is best to adjust my horse? Chiropractor or Veterinarian?***

Put a Chiropractor and a Veterinarian adjustor/manipulator side by side and usually the Chiro will have a more accurate subluxation diagnosis and be better skilled in correcting the problem needing adjusting. I feel I am better trained and skilled to adjust horses or other animals because I spent 4 years studying musculo-skeletal function and dysfunction. Having a great understanding of the human biomechanics, levers & pulleys of muscles, this assists my understanding of transfer & compensation through the rider's body down through the horse's body.

***Compensation & Balance***

Resistance and difficulty with balance becomes evident with subluxations (misalignments) of the spine. The weakness in a person's structure does affect the horse's balance, movement and attitude. Compensations will then be made by the horse evident by resistance, bad attitude, physical guarding, stiffness, loss of flexibility and loss of range of motion. The same holds true for weaknesses in the horse. The rider will compensate, over-ride, and be less discreet with aids, lose valuable training time and effort, as well as then have physical manifestations of the horse's off-ness. A well adjusted spine = balance, grace, creativity, joy and health.

***Symptoms of a Subluxation in the Horse***

The most common effect of a subluxation is pain. Horses in pain will compensate in gait or posture and often resist or refuse to perform. Some common symptoms:

- Abnormal posture: standing in a tucked-up or spread-out posture; placing one limb abnormally.
- Discomfort when saddling: actively resisting the saddle or cinch.
- Discomfort when riding: slow to warm up or "cold backed"; dipping in back when mounted, bucking, difficulty with sitting trot.
- Evasions: extending head and neck and hollowing back.
- Wringing tail.
- Pinning ears.
- Grinding teeth.
- Refusal or unwillingness over jumps.
- Refusal or resistance in performing lateral or collected movements.

- Development of unusual behavior patterns: sudden refusals or resistance.
- Facial expression of apprehension or pain.
- Sensitivity to touch: uncomfortable to a brush or light palpation.
- Bad attitude: biting, unfriendliness.

Subluxations may cause changes in muscle coordination and flexibility that affect the performance ability of the horse. These symptoms may be:

- Unusual, perhaps indefinable, gait abnormalities that vary from limb to limb and change depending on gait; the rider or trainer may be aware that the horse is "off" but is unable to pinpoint the problem; the horse is not lame, but also not performing up to potential.
- Lack of coordination in gaits.
- Stiffness when coming out of stall.
- Stiffness in lateral movements of neck or back.
- Muscle atrophy: loss of muscle mass over the pelvis or in portions of an upper limb.
- Rope-walking or plaiting: placing one or both rear limbs too far inside normal track.
- Shortened stride in one or two limbs.
- Inability to engage rear quarters or flex the lumbosacral region.
- Inability to lengthen topline.
- Improper frame.
- Decreased stride length.
- Difficulty flexing at the poll.
- Not coming onto the bit or into the bridle.
- Tilting head to the side.
- Obscure lameness.
- On one line or resisting one rein.
- Rider cannot sit centered on horse.
- Dragging toes or unusual shoe wear.
- Difficulty in particular gait such as rack or canter.

Subluxations also cause symptoms by interfering with the nerve supply to other tissues such as the skin, glands, and blood vessels. Some of the symptoms that result may be unusual body- or tail-rubbing, increased sensitivity to heat or cold, and asymmetrical sweating or lack of sweating.

These lists of symptoms caused by subluxations are not meant to be complete, but they illustrate the variety of problems that are possible with subluxations on the spinal column.

Some of this information was obtained from Healing Your Horse: Alternative Therapies, 1993, by Sharon Willoughby, DVM, DC