

# Tim Couzens

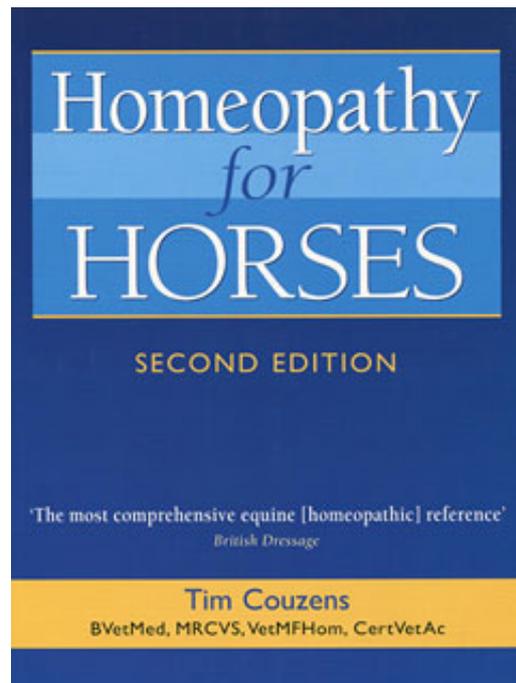
## Homeopathy for Horses

Reading excerpt

[Homeopathy for Horses](#)

of [Tim Couzens](#)

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# The Heart and Circulation

**H**ear and circulatory problems always need thorough investigation to determine the exact nature of any problem and to get an accurate prognosis. Some conditions may not always be very obvious in the early stages as the performance of the horse may be unaffected. Remember that advanced cardiac disease may cause the horse to drop suddenly with risk not only to itself, but to the rider as well.

Homeopathic remedies should be considered as additional support to any advice or treatment that your vet suggests. Selecting an appropriate remedy will depend a lot on the way your horse's heart sounds through a stethoscope and from the character and feel of the pulse. The average pulse rate for an adult horse is between 30 and 44 beats per minute. For very young foals the average is around 80 per minute.

Conditions that affect the heart broadly fall into three categories:

- Murmurs
- Arrhythmias
- Inflammatory conditions which include endocarditis, myocarditis and pericarditis

## Murmurs

Distorted or fibrosed (scarred) valves in the heart usually occur as a result of endocarditis and will cause turbulence or interference with the flow of blood leading to abnormal sounds which are called murmurs. Murmurs are classified according to intensity, quality and pitch. Using these details your vet should be able to give you additional information that might help select a suitable remedy, the three main valves that can be affected are the • mitral, tricuspid and aortic valves, which can become either narrowed or distorted. Symptoms of

valvular murmurs include poor performance, abnormal pulse rate and oedema (swelling), affecting the limbs or brisket due to poor circulation.

## Arrhythmias

Disturbances in the rhythm of the heart as opposed to valvular damage, are referred to as arrhythmias. These affect the way the heart beats and cause it to pump the blood inefficiently. The most minor is a dropped beat, often regarded as insignificant, but more serious arrhythmias such as atrial fibrillation, can cause significant and worrying problems.

## Murmurs and arrhythmias - selecting a remedy

The remedies listed provide a general overview of the most commonly used remedies, together with suitable potencies and doses. It is not uncommon to combine cardiac remedies. For example, Cactus and Crataegus are often used together as a general tonic for the heart.

### **Cactus grandiflorus**

Acts best where the mitral valve is affected and where the heart and pulse rate are both increased and forceful as the heart tries to compensate. Cramp-like pains in the heart may cause the horse to halt suddenly. Dose: *7x potency three times daily*

### **Crataegus**

This remedy is a good general tonic for the heart and excellent for helping with any chronic heart problem. Crataegus also helps improve the circulation and is useful where the legs swell. In contrast to Cactus, the heart muscle is weaker and although the pulse is quicker, it is feeble. This

remedy is said to regulate blood pressure.

*Dose: 1x potency three times daily*

### **Digitalis**

Check for a slow pulse and irregular heartbeat. The heart is enlarged as it tries to compensate, yet the heart muscle is weaker. Indicated more for mitral valve problems. The least amount of exercise or exertion sends the pulse racing immediately. *Dose: 6c three times daily*

### **Lycopus virginicus**

A rapid and forceful heartbeat characterises this remedy although the pulse is weaker, irregular or intermittent. Lycopus will help reduce the heart rate and lower the blood pressure. Useful where there is also a dry cough, where a small amount of blood is coughed up. *Dose: 6c three times daily*

### **Convallaria**

Convallaria increases the energy of the heart and helps regulate the heartbeat. It is useful where the heart is enlarged and where the circulation is sluggish. Check for a rapid and irregular pulse. *Dose: 3x potency three times daily*

### **Strophanthus hispidus**

Used to tone the heart especially where the heart muscle is weak and there is a tendency for fluid to collect as a result of poor circulation. The mitral valve is diseased and the pulse rate is increased. Indicated where the lungs are congested and where there may be some difficulty in breathing. *Dose: 6x potency three times daily*

### **Adonis vernalis**

Adonis is mainly used to help remove oedematous fluid from the limbs where the circulation is weakened. Check for a slow, weak pulse. Suited to animals that lack vitality. *Dose: 1x potency three times daily*

### **Laurocerasus**

Used where the mitral valve is damaged and where the mucous membranes are dark (cyanotic) in colour due to poor blood perfusion. The pulse is difficult to feel and feeble in character. Laurocerasus can also

be used to stimulate breathing in newborn foals, where the animal is gasping for breath and the membranes are cyanosed.

*Dose: for regular use the 3x potency three times daily*

To revive foals, use the mother tincture 0, two drops every five minutes

### **Kalmia**

Check for a slow, weak pulse together with a stiff, stilted gait. The shoulder region may be especially stiff and pain in the lower back may also be apparent.

*Dose: 6x potency three times daily*

### **Spongia**

Used in older horses where there is reduced exercise! tolerance accompanied by an increased respiratory rate and some slight difficulty in breathing. The underlying cause is damaged or distorted valves leading to a murmur. Check for a rapid pulse, distended superficial blood vessels and a dry cough for clues to using Spongia. *Dose: 30c twice daily*

## **Inflammatory Conditions**

### **Endocarditis**

Inflammation of the membrane lining the heart chambers is called endocarditis and can be caused by a bacterial infection or much more rarely, parasites. Symptoms include initial fever and poor pulse. The condition ultimately leads to damage to the heart valves. Suitable remedies include:

#### **Aconite**

Use in early stages as soon as the condition is diagnosed. The pulse will be full and bounding at this stage and the blood vessels will pulse. The horse will appear anxious.

*Dose: 1M potency every 15 minutes for four doses then re-assess*

#### **Naja**

This is the most important remedy for helping with acute endocarditis. The pulse is irregular and

gradually slows. The body temperature drops as the heart becomes weaker and weaker. If the animal recovers the heart valves are left damaged. Dose: *30c, dose at 75 minute intervals.*

Other appropriate remedies which could be given at 15 minute *intervals*, include *Cactus grandiflorus* 1x, *Convallaria* 3x and *Adonis vernalis* 1x. Try to choose the remedy that most closely matches your horse's **symptoms**.

Another useful remedy that can be given alongside those listed is *Calc fluor*, which may help reduce the damage that occurs to the valves. •Use *the 30c potency twice daily*

### Myocarditis

Myocarditis is inflammation of the heart muscle and can occur as a secondary complication to conditions such as strangles or navel ill. The heart muscle becomes damaged leading to a weakening of the heart and compensatory enlargement over time. Affected horses will show exercise intolerance, breathing difficulty and oedema in advanced cases. Suitable supportive remedies include *Crataegus* 1x, *Adonis vernalis* 1x, *Digitalis* 6c and *Strophanthus hispidus* 6x. Dose: *three times daily*

### Pericarditis

The pericardium is the lining that covers the outside of the heart, enclosing it within a sac. Inflammation of the pericardium, *pericarditis*, occurs as the result of either a bacterial or viral infection and can arise as a complication in conditions such as pneumonia, pleurisy or strangles.

This is a serious condition, initially commencing with a fever and a little later, the collection of fluid

within the pericardial sac itself. This interferes with the action of the heart leading to a thin, wiry but fast pulse, pain over the chest wall, reluctance to move, a tendency to hold the front legs in together and muffling of the heart sounds. Long-term consequences include the development of adhesions and chronic heart failure.

In the early stages dose with *Aconite 1M every 15 minutes* and re-assess the case after four or five doses. Treatment should then follow with an appropriate remedy:

#### **Spigelia**

This is the remedy most often used to help treat pericarditis in the acute stages. Symptoms match closely those of the disease including the reluctance to move, chest pain and weak pulse. Dose: *30c, dose at 75 minute intervals*

#### **Apis**

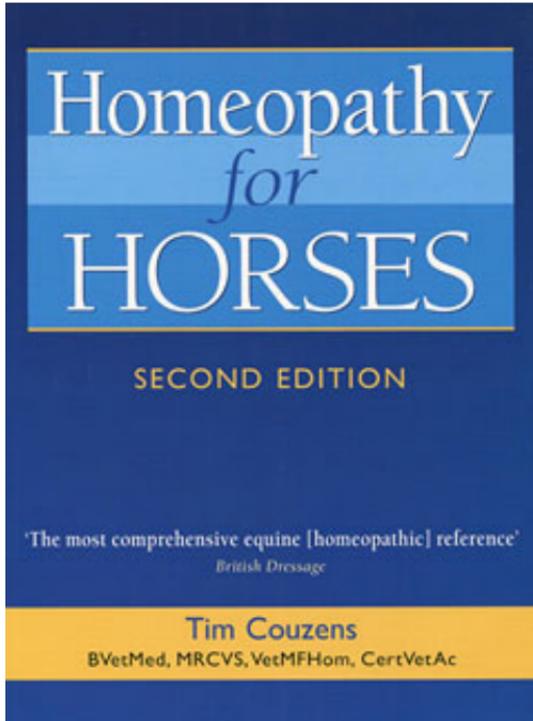
Will help reduce the amount of fluid in the pericardial sac and relieve the pressure on the heart. *Suggested potency 200c, three times daily*

#### **Spongia**

Useful after the acute stages, where symptoms of heart failure are apparent such as a dry cough. *Suggested potency 30c, three times daily*

Other remedies to consider include *Colchicum* 30c, *Cantharis* 30c and *Bryonia* 30c in the acute stage and other supportive cardiac remedies later as already listed. *Calc fluor* 30c and *Acetic acid* 30c in combination can be used to help reduce the chances of adhesions forming between the pericardial sac and heart muscle.

Dose: *twice daily alongside other remedies for several months*



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