



To: **All AERC Members**

From: **AERC Education Committee**

The Education Committee is committed to helping you compete safely, realize your goals, and protect the welfare of your horse.

This letter summarizes how you can compete safely and well. It is not enough to depend on the ride veterinarians to “keep you out of trouble”; it is imperative that you learn to prevent problems by identifying the signs long before vet treatment is needed. You owe it to your horse and yourself to read and take this advice to heart.

Three keys to safe competition are:

1. Pace your horse properly throughout the ride by always listening to your horse. Proper pacing—and not overriding your horse—is critical to successful completions. Overriding, frequently caused by letting a horse “run with the herd,” is probably the single biggest cause of pulls and treated horses. The attached article, “The Art of Pacing the Distance Horse” by Susan Greenall, provides wise guidance.

2. Keep your horse well hydrated before, during, and after the ride. Dehydration is a principal cause of treatment. Attached are three articles on maintaining proper hydration: “Preventing Pre-Ride Dehydration” by Stagg Newman, “The Importance of Hydration in the Endurance Horse” by Barbara McCrary, and “Coping with Heat and Humidity” by Angie McGhee.

3. Treat the ride vets as your teammates in the competition. Veterinarians are your partners in this sport to help you and your horse. It is up to you, the rider, to observe your horse and share any areas of concern with the ride vets. Remember the vets have the horses’ welfare as their top priority. **Communicate with the vets:**

- ✓ Share your concerns and observations
- ✓ Listen carefully to their advice and act on it
- ✓ Don’t whine or argue
- ✓ Show your appreciation for the value they bring and the tough job they do

On the back of this letter is an update on “Preventing the Need for Treatment.” A primary goal is to prevent the need for treatment. However, if your horse does need treatment, seek it promptly to protect your horse. Keep this article and refer to it before each ride.

The AERC is working to provide education through *Endurance News*, the AERC web site: www.aerc.org, clinics, direct letters, and mentors. Please take advantage of these resources, and please share your knowledge and insights with your fellow riders. Take these lessons to heart so your horse competes safely, and **have a great ride year!**

American Endurance Ride Conference

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