

WARNING - Some might find the photographs graphic. We feel they are essential to the story. - Ed.

THE FRIESIAN

INGA'S SARCOID

In the hopes of educating others on our experience with our mare Inga and her very stubborn sarcoids, we were asked to write an article on her story. Sarcoids are skin tumors that are normally benign but can be very aggressive and can pop up pretty much anywhere on a horse. They are thought to be caused by the bovine papillomavirus (BPV) transmitted through fly bites. Sarcoids are not normally life threatening but can progress to a point that quality of life comes into play. This is Inga's 'Sarcoid Journey.'

Our Inga is a 2002 KFPS model mare by Anton 343-Sport-Preferent out of Sebeline-Star/Preferent/Prestatie. We purchased her at 4 months old and brought her home at 6 months. Inga was a champion driving and riding horse back in her heyday and we had big plans for her future. In 2009 we noticed an innocent little dry patch of skin in her left girth area.... just minding it's own business for the next 2 years.... no idea what it was. In spring 2011, Inga was sent to a reproduction veterinarian for a couple months for breeding. That dry patch of skin began growing into ugly tumors that rose up out of the skin, the hormonal manipulation had made it go crazy!



2009 Inga at the Reno, Nv. Keuring, makes Model
 (Photo credit Charles Hilton Photography ©)

In November 2011, our veterinarian at the time did a biopsy and Inga was diagnosed with sarcoids. The treatment plan for Inga would be to cut the tumors out. We did not know anything about sarcoids at the time; this seemed to be a reasonable thing to do. The tumors were surgically removed leaving an open area that was about 4 inches in diameter. The area was sutured closed, dressed and it healed up over several months.



12/2011 Sutured site after sarcoids removed.
 Photo: Erin DiLeo©

About a year later the tumors started to grow back and they seemed to favor the sites of the former suture holes. At this point our veterinarian recommended Fluorouracil Cream®, a topical chemotherapy agent. We used this cream, off and on for several years, never getting rid of the tumors completely but keeping them at bay. During this time Inga would heal enough for a ride or two, then the area would get irritated from using a girth, the tumors would start to grow again, and get to a point we couldn't use a saddle, harness or surcingle.



SARCOID JOURNEY

BY ERIN DILEO, RN

It got to the point that we had to stop riding and driving her at all. It was also during this time that we noticed the sarcoids would become very aggressive in the spring when Inga was coming into heat and during her pregnancies. Inga had two foals during this time. The Fluorouracil Cream© wasn't nearly as effective anymore and a search for something new started.

We tried XXterra©.... a natural "bloodroot" product commonly used on sarcoids. The first week this seemed promising. In the end, all the XXterra© did was aggravate the tumors and caused them to get very aggressive. When the tumors became larger we would have them debulked. A new treatment was once again needed. In January 2017, our current veterinarian surgically implanted cisplatin beads into the tumor areas. Cisplatin is a powerful chemotherapy agent and once again this showed some progress but after three months the tumors were just aggravated and started growing again.



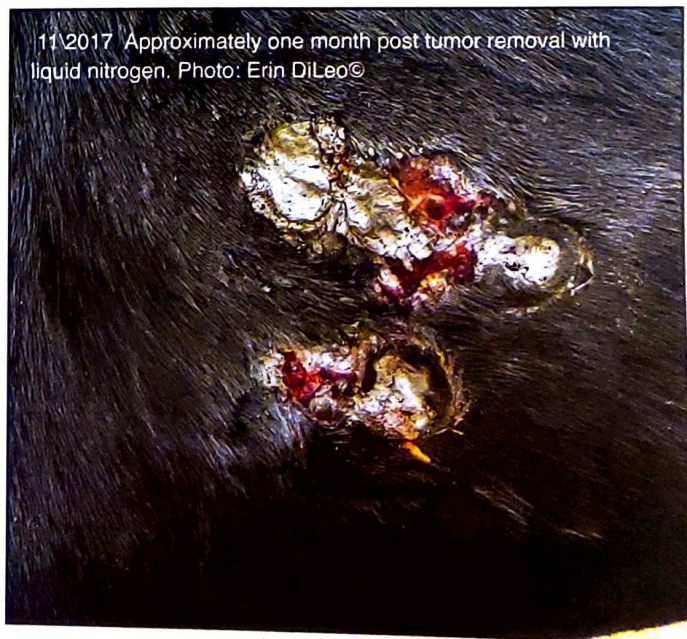
01/2017 Cisplatin beads sewn into the tumors. White markings above insertion point. Photo: Erin DiLeo©

In March 2017, we started Regressin© injections. Regressin© is an immunotherapy treatment using the horse's own body to fight the tumors. The injections went directly into the tumors. Inga received 7 treatments over 6 months. The initial response was promising but over time progress slowed to a crawl, if at all.



04/2017 One month after first Regressin injection - immunotherapy treatment. Photo: Erin DiLeo©

By October 2017 the tumors were growing back and it was decided to try tumor debulking with liquid nitrogen applied to the former tumor areas. This had to be the hardest of treatments for Inga to recover from and the worst part in just a couple weeks the tumors were growing back more aggressive than ever. You could literally see them getting bigger as you watched. From morning feeding to afternoon feeding you could see a size difference.



11/2017 Approximately one month post tumor removal with liquid nitrogen. Photo: Erin DiLeo©

In a last ditch effort our veterinarian consulted with the University of California Davis regarding treatment. UC Davis recommended having her treated at their facility 3 times a week with radiation and chemotherapy under general anesthesia for 4 weeks - to the tune of \$12,000 on up - with no guarantees. We decided that was too much to put our precious Inga through. We had also already spent \$10,000 in treatments over the years. Considering the aggressive nature of the tumors, what we already put Inga through, and the costs involved, we decided that maybe it was time to make the heartbreaking decision to stop all treatments, let her enjoy life as long as she could and euthanize when her quality of life became an issue. We called and told our veterinarian this and he asked us to come in and talk, he didn't want to give up yet and wanted to "think outside the box."

We came up with a plan to do a large surgical resection of the tumor area. The area would be left open to heal from the inside out. Once the skin edges were starting to heal we would start using "Rick Simpson Oil," a cannabis product, to see if it could inhibit any latent virus residing in the skin's nerve endings. It was going to be a big experiment but we had tried every treatment under the sun, so why not try this "out of the box" treatment.

On December 13, 2017 the surgical resection was performed. The slab that was removed measured 8"x7" and the cavity went deep into the muscles.



12/13/17 Pre-op at AVEH

12/2017 Pre-Op tumors. Photo: Erin DiLeo©

The large cavern was left open with wound care and bandaging was performed every 2 or 3 days for the first 3 months. Wound care included washing and debriding the area, applying the Rick Simpson oil to the skin edges, re-dressing the area and then using a light stable blanket to cover her and keep her from messing with the dressing. We used duct tape to keep the dressing on and had to get creative at times to keep it in place.



12/13/17 Fresh post-op at AVEH

12/13/17 8 X 7 wound post tumor removal. Photo: Erin DiLeo©

Over time it was getting more difficult to keep the dressing intact so we shopped for a belly wrap, similar to what's used for post-op colic surgery. These wraps are shaped to sit farther back and we determined they wouldn't work for Inga's situation. While attending Horse Expo in Pomona, California we came across a booth that had a wrap that was made for sitting behind the girth from SOLEquine (HorseRAP-Universal Wound Wrap)©. To keep it from sliding back we fashioned a chest harness system utilizing two pieces of duct tape stuck to each other that formed a strap. This strap went around the chest, allowed for movement, and attached to the wrap to hold it in place by not allowing it to slide back. This chest harness was pretty much the design of a driving harness breast collar with neck straps. This system caused no irritation or sore spots and allowed the dressing to stay in place much better because the wrap helped keep it in place.



Inga's healing was progressing beautifully; we were and are amazed at how nicely this gaping wound was healing. Then around Post-Op Day 90, and for several weeks, there was no change in the size of the wound. It just didn't seem like it was closing up much at all. It was very frustrating and disappointing, even more so when we discovered a fungal infection in the surrounding hair. Not knowing why the healing had slowed to a crawl, we decided to stop the Rick Simpson Oil application. We weren't sure if it was starting to suppress the healing or not so we stopped it. We were worried that the tumors would come back, but to date they still haven't. We also started treating the fungal infection and in the meantime researched treatments for difficult to heal wounds.

We did research and came across a wound care product called Redi-Heal© which is a "borate-based biological glass" that replicates the body's response to the healing process, improving the blood supply to the wound. Day 113 was the first application of the Redi-Heal©, which looks and feels like cotton candy. It is spread across the wound and then covered with a dressing until the next change 3-5 days later.

Within 5 days we had changes in the size of the wound and healthier looking tissue. The fungal infection was taken care of by washing with a medicated shampoo several times a week. We were back on track in the healing process. The slow healing was probably due to the fungal infection.

As of this writing we are now on post-op day 210, 7 months into the healing of this gaping wound. The wound is looking pretty darn amazing! It's basically all skin now, but we're still using an ointment version of the Redi-Heal© and keeping the wound covered with a dressing until the new pink skin turns to nice thick black skin. So far there's been no evidence of any new sarcoid growth. We're not sure if the Rick Simpson Oil is the reason or that the veterinarian got it all out this time. Either way we're happy with the outcome and wouldn't change a thing of this final and successful treatment. This has been a long hard fought journey, 7 years that required a lot of patience, research and persistence. For more information, photos, and to see how Inga is doing today find Inga's 'Sarcoid Journey' on FaceBook©.

05\18\18 Chest and Neck Strap holding the Universal Wound Wrap in place, keeping it from sliding back. Photo: Erin DiLeo©



04\06\18 Applied RediHeal
Photo: Erin DiLeo©



Healing Progression Photographs on next page...

INGA'S SARCOID JOURNEY

THE FRIESIAN

HERE'S THE PROGRESSION OF HOW INGA HEALED:




horseRAP®

- ✓ Cold Therapy Wraps
- ✓ Full-Leg & Universal Wound Wraps infused with SMARTSILVER®
- ✓ Cold & Heat Therapy duoPAK®

 **SolEquine.com**







- Controls the growth of odor-causing bacteria
- Long lasting silver ion release
- Will not thermally or UV degrade
- Effects of silver lasts through 30+ washings



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