

CONTRAINDICATIONS TO THERAPEUTIC RIDING

If a person has any of the following medical conditions, riding is very unlikely to be a beneficial activity for him or her, and may even be harmful. Before an individual is accepted into the therapeutic riding program, the physician and program therapist should be consulted concerning the person's suitability for riding.

- Moderate to severe agitation (confusion, excitement) and/or very disruptive behavior
- Spinal instability, including spondylolisthesis (partial dislocation) of cervical (neck) vertebrae
- Severe osteoporosis, which is most common in senior citizens and involves brittleness of the bones, hence the possibility of fractures
- Seizures that are not controlled by medication
- Pathological fractures arising from a condition such as osteogenesis imperfecta (brittle bones)
- Acute stages of arthritis
- Periods of exacerbation of multiple sclerosis (an autoimmune disease that affects the brain and spinal cord)
- Open pressure sores or wounds
- The individual is taking medication in type or dosage that induces physical states that make riding risky and/or inappropriate
- Hemophilia – a rare bleeding disorder that prevents the blood from clotting normally
- The individual is taking anticoagulant medications (blood thinners)
- Atlanto-axial instability (increased flexibility between the 1st and 2nd bones of the neck)
- Spondylolisthesis –forward displacement of one of the lower vertebra over a lower segment
- Coxarthrosis (degeneration of the hip joint) – riding causes too much stress on that joint
- Detached retina of the eye
- Acute herniated intervertebral disc, which may press on spinal nerve roots
- Complete quadriplegia, occurring as a result of spinal cord injury
- Structural scoliosis greater than 30 degrees, excessive kyphosis (rearward increase in the curvature of the thoracic spine), or lordosis (increased forward curvature in the lumbar spine), or hemivertebrae (a congenital defect in which one side of a vertebra is incomplete)
- Dislocation, spondylolisthesis or dysplasia (abnormal development) of the hip(s) with significant restriction or asymmetry
- Any condition that the Instructor, Therapist, or Physician does not feel comfortable treating
- After a rhizotomy (a procedure performed to reduce neck pain due to facet joint degeneration), a rider should wait for at least 6 months before participating in a riding program.