What is IRAP?

IRAP is an acronym for interleukin-1 receptor antagonist protein, which is a protein created by stimulating plasma from the horse’s own blood. IRAP, also known as autologous-conditioned serum, may provide anti-inflammatory relief to horses with osteoarthritis and inflammatory conditions of their joints.

What does IRAP therapy do for lameness in horses?

The interleukin-1 receptor antagonist protein is injected into the affected joint, slowing the inflammatory process that leads to and perpetuates cartilage damage and osteoarthritis.

Unlike repeated injection of cortisone-like steroids, IRAP may be used repeatedly without detrimental effects to the cartilage. If used early in joint disease, IRAP may prevent progression and development of osteoarthritis which may prolong the performance years of your horse and prevent early retirement, as well as decrease the need for continued veterinary treatment and costly therapies.

What is involved in IRAP injections?

The affected joint is usually treated every 7-10 days for three or more treatments. The amount of IRAP injected depends on the size and location of the joint. Rest is typically recommended following each injection, and IRAP may be used in conjunction with other therapies such as surgery or regenerative therapies such as stem-cell and PRP.

The IRAP Process

- Blood is collected and incubated for 24 hours in a special syringe, which stimulates production of the protein.
- After incubation, the sterile plasma rich in IRAP is obtained and stored in a special freezer at -80°C.
- The IRAP-rich plasma is then thawed and when needed, injected into the affected joint.

IRAP therapy may be a part of a therapeutic plan chosen by your veterinarian. It may be used as part of a treatment plan for lameness.

Fact sheet provided by the University of Florida Large Animal Hospital
For more information, visit largeanimal.vethospitals.ufl.edu or call 352-392-2229

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