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Avoid Pee Panic

As we head into the season of white precipitation, we often get the panicked call from a concerned horse owner whose horse is peeing blood. This is very concerning if the horse is indeed peeing blood. Our first response is to ask a very simple question, "When you watch the horse urinate is it red or are you seeing the red on the ground?" If you observed your horse urinating and the urine stream is red or has blood clots this is concerning but if you see the red in the snow, we are not concerned.

Equine urine can contain plant metabolites called pyrocatechines. These metabolites oxidize at low temperatures turning the urine red. This process can worry horse owners who spot the red urine on snow or shavings. If you see red snow or shavings watch the horse urinate, if it is abnormal before it hits the ground call your veterinarian. If it looks normal coming out and takes a minute for the snow or shavings to turn red you can breathe a sigh of relief and thank the pyrocatechines for your increased heart rate.

