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*A Tradition of Leadership and Excellence in Equine Medicine*

**Endoscopic examinations  
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Endoscopic examination of the upper airway is a common way to evaluate the breathing capacity of (particularly) young racehorses. First and foremost, the size of the airway is considered to be significant in the amount of air the horse is able to take in.

The arytenoid cartilages are critically examined for symmetry of form and function, as well as the indication of infection or inflammation as often occurs with chondritis or pharyngitis. Ideally, both arytenoids abduct readily on inspiration in a synchronous manner and show the ability to maintain an abducted position. The size, shape and consistency of the epiglottis is also important in predicting possible problems such as dorsal displacement of the soft palate (DDSP), or epiglottic entrapment. The epiglottis should be free from evidence of inflammation or abnormal structure such as a cyst, which can interfere with normal throat function.

Many abnormalities associated with the upper airway of race horses can be diagnosed in the quiet, standing animal. However, some conditions only occur at high speeds and therefore must be diagnosed on a treadmill where the horse's throat can be evaluated as it is during exercise. DDSP and epiglottic entrapment are examples. Exercise induced pulmonary hemorrhage (bleeding) is the only condition that requires diagnosis immediately post-exercise. This is accomplished by passing the endoscope down into the trachea to observe the blood. Other structures of the upper airway and nasopharyngeal area can be examined using the endoscope but are not as typically associated with preventative or prepurchase situations.

Please find below an anatomic diagram for your reference.

