

# Faecal water – not just a cosmetic problem!

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Anyone who deals with the subject of faecal water quickly realizes how complex the problem of faecal water is. Watery faeces has many causes and is different for every horse. There is no one-size-fits-all solution, so every horse owner has to try out what might be right for their horse.



## What exactly is faecal water?

Faecal water is a digestive disorder and should not be confused with diarrhoea. Whereas in diarrhoea a normally formed ball of faeces is barely recognizable, the occurrence of free faecal water is generally understood to mean the separate discharge of mostly formed horse droppings and black-brown liquid (Carolin Zehnder, LMU Munich (2009)).

## What is the problem?

For most horse owners, faecal water is primarily just a cosmetic problem. The constant washing, especially in winter, is annoying. But faecal water is more problematic than most people think. Why?

- | Frequent washing causes the affected skin to become sore. Bald patches develop and the skin becomes inflamed. Germs and pathogens can enter the skin.
- | The horse feels unwell, bloated, flabby, the saddle girth pinches, every movement is uncomfortable. The horse is tense – it cannot perform to its full potential.
- | Nutrients are lost, which further weakens the metabolism.

## What causes faecal water?

Faecal water is one of the so-called multifactorial diseases. This means that there are many, often individually different causes of faecal water. There is no patent remedy for the treatment of faecal water. What helps one horse may even worsen the symptoms in another. Every horse owner whose horse suffers from faecal water must look for individual solutions.

The following causes of faecal water are discussed by scientists:

**1. Poor forage quality, silage feeding:** biogenic amines are produced by fermentation. This is an intentional process in the production of silage, such as grass silage (preservation), but also leads to the formation of histamines, which can have a negative effect on the liver and digestive processes. The use of grass silage in particular is discussed very differently

in horses suffering from faecal water. In addition to the formation of biogenic amines and the lower water binding capacity compared to hay, the formation of clostridia in the silage is often discussed as a trigger for free faecal water.

**2. Liver damages lead to detoxification disorders, which in turn place a long-term burden on the gastrointestinal tract.** Prolonged stress, the use of medication, poisonous plants or an excess of body fat can weaken the liver.

**3. Psychological factors such as social stress, food envy, and constant fear:** more and more horses are being kept in groups, which is certainly the closest thing to the horses' natural needs. However, the demand for social contact in the group can also lead to problems. While higher-ranking animals claim the best sleeping and feeding places for themselves, lower-ranking animals have to fight for their place in the herd and give way to higher-ranking animals. One of the consequences of this is that the lower-ranking animals eat irregularly or too little food (especially forage such as hay/straw).

**4. General feeding errors:** these include, for example, too much fermentable material such as young grass, low-fibre silage or too much concentrated feed or rations that are too high in fat. Horses suffering from faecal water should be given more structured crude fibre. The requirement is 2.5 to 3% dry matter (DM) per kg live weight. The latest recommendations for ponies and lactating mares are even 3 to 3.5% DM per kg of live weight and day. For a normally stressed warmblood with 600 kg live weight, this means at least 10 to 13 kg of hay per day. When grazing, straw should be added if necessary. The horse owner should also ensure that the horse has enough time to consume the roughage. A horse should spend at least twelve hours a day eating, with a maximum of four to five hours between meals. Ideally, the last feed should therefore be given in the evening at around 10.00 pm. However, this is not usually practicable. Hay nets or computer-controlled feed troughs should provide a remedy here, as feed intake is made more difficult and thus is prolonged.



## Brewers' yeast strengthens the gut

The  $\beta$ -glucans and mannans (MOS) of the brewers' yeast cell wall can bind mycotoxins and pathogenic germs, among other things. Brewers' yeast itself has a positive effect on the microflora. The high crude fibre content and the pectins from the apple pomace and the unmolassed beet pulp (Leiber YeaFi® AB) also strengthen the intestinal mucosa. By strengthening the gut-associated lymphoid tissue (GALT), the immune defence is increased. An intact immune system in turn supports and strengthens the liver, the body's most important detoxification organ.

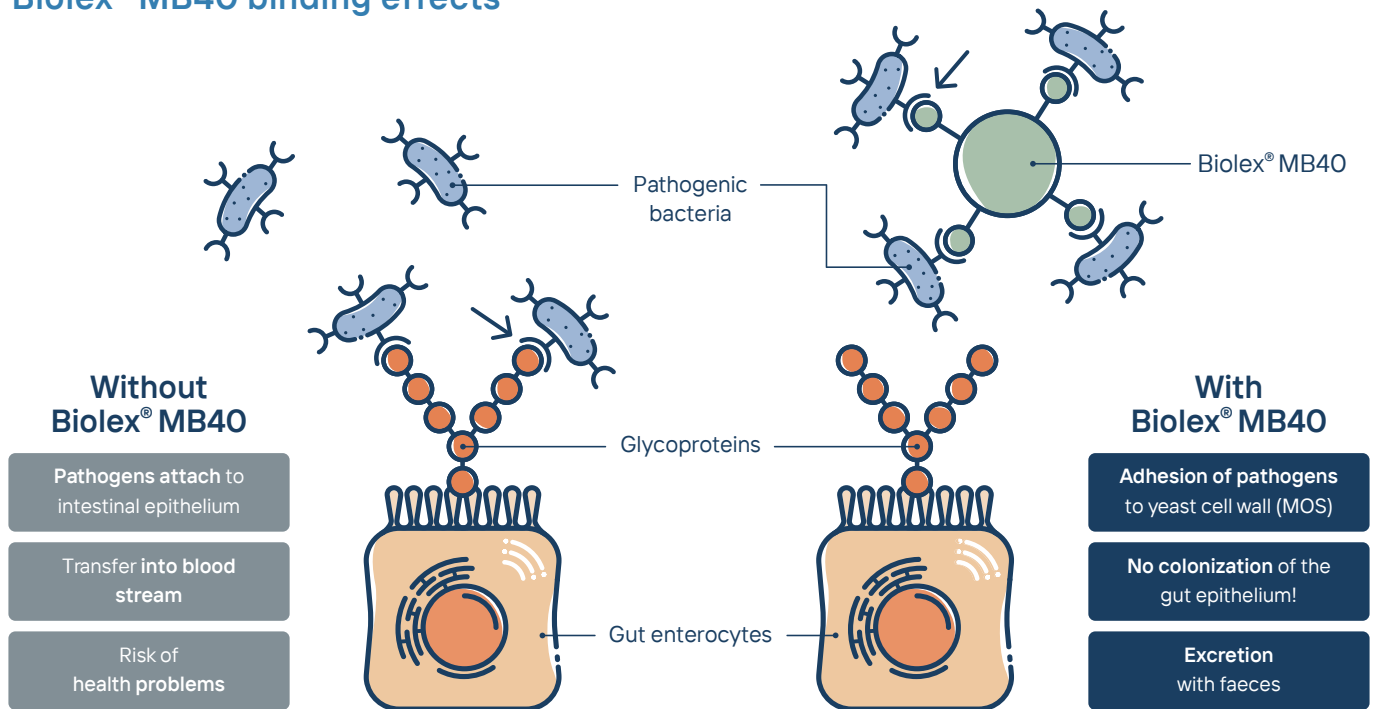
Brewers' yeast contains many nutrients and active ingredients in organically available form, in particular the vitamins of the B complex. Vitamin B1 (thiamine), for example, is regarded as a

so-called anti-stress factor. Vitamin B1 is involved in stimulus conduction and the central nervous system and therefore has an influence on stress reduction and nerve stability. These are all important factors that can also have a positive effect on faecal consistency, such as diarrhoea or watery stools.

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Biolex® MB40 has a prebiotic, immunostimulating, and anti-inflammatory effect. It strengthens intestinal health and improves the integrity of the intestine (intestinal protection).

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