



Dear Parents:

There is a condition known as Atlanto-Axial dislocation or subluxation in individuals with Down Syndrome.

Parents or guardians of children with Down Syndrome who seek to participate in horseback riding with the Bakas-Horses for Handicapped, must be made aware of this condition known as Atlanto-Axial dislocation or subluxation which can occur in 10-16 percent of individuals with Down Syndrome. The two vertebrae at the top of the spinal column are named the atlas and axis respectively. In some persons with Down Syndrome, the ligaments and bone structures that normally maintain the proper position of these two vertebrae with respect to each other and the skull are abnormal. The abnormality permits under certain conditions of physical stress the spinal column to shift which pinches the nerves issuing from the base of the brain, leading to severe consequences.

Because of this possibility, the Hillsborough County Parks, Recreation and Conservation Department and the Bakas-Horses for Handicapped wishes to protect persons with Down Syndrome from activities such as horseback riding which could aggravate this condition until they have been examined by their doctor. The doctor will determine if the condition is present by an examination that requires an x-ray view of the neck when it is both flexed and extended. If the x-rays demonstrate that the Atlanto-Axial dislocation or subluxation is present, then the person with Down Syndrome may not participate in horseback riding.

If Atlanto-Axial dislocation or subluxation is not present in an individual with Down Syndrome, the individual may participate without restrictions in the Bakas-Horses for Handicapped program.

Sincerely,

Beth Harre-Orr



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Hillsborough County Parks, Recreation and Conservation Department



## PHYSICIAN REFERRAL FORM FOR DOWN SYNDROME

### ATLANTO-AXIAL INSTABILITY/SUBLUXATION RELEASE

RIDER'S NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

A cervical vertebrae x-ray study shows that this person (circle one):

Does have

Does not have

Evidence of Atlanto-Axial instability or subluxation.

If he/she does have this condition, then participation in horseback riding will not be allowed.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Physician's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Physician's Title (MD or DO)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone

Please return this form to:

BAKAS EQUESTRIAN CENTER

11510 Whisper Lake Trail

Tampa, Florida 33626

Phone: (813) 264-3890

Fax: (813) 264-8984



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