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## **ABSOLUTE CONTRAINDICATIONS FOR HIPPO THERAPY/THERAPEUTIC RIDING**

Contraindications include, but are not limited to:

- Active mental health disorders that create grave safety concerns (fire setting, suicide, animal abuse, extreme violent behavior)
- Acute herniated disc – protrusion of an intervertebral disc into the intervertebral foramen, compressing the nerve root
- Chiari II malformation with active symptoms
- Atlantoaxial instability (a displacement of the C1 vertebra in relation to the C2 vertebra) with neurological signs, as assessed by a qualified physician – this is most often seen in Down’s Syndrome and Juvenile Rheumatoid Arthritis
- Coxa arthrosis – degeneration of the hip joint. Sitting on the horse would place extreme stress on the joint.
- Generalized seizures that are not controlled by medication
- Hemophilia, with recent history of bleeding episodes
- Indwelling urethral catheters (females)
- Acute exacerbations of Rheumatoid Arthritis, Multiple Sclerosis, diabetes, and some other medical conditions
- Open wounds over weight bearing surfaces
- Pathological fractures without successful treatment of the underlying pathology (e.g. severe osteoporosis, Osteogenesis Imperfecta, bone tumors, etc.)
- Tethered cord with symptoms
- Unstable spine including unstable internal hardware

## **AGE RESTRICTIONS**

- Children under 2 - 3 years of age (hippotherapy) – the method by which hippotherapy works is altered because of the child’s small size
- Children under 4 - 5 years of age (therapeutic riding) – it is difficult for children to learn riding skills before this age