



Coombefield Equine Clinic
Summerleaze Farm, Axminster



Equine Newsletter

June 2017

Laminitis

What is Laminitis?

Laminitis is an extremely painful inflammatory condition of the delicate laminae in the hoof. In healthy hooves these delicate (Velcro-like) tissues bind together the inner hoof wall and the pedal bone. Laminitis affects the blood flow to these tissues causing them to weaken. As laminitis develops the attachment of the pedal bone to the hoof wall starts to fail, leaving the pedal bone to rotate and point towards to sole, and in the worst cases to sink right through it. Laminitis is most common in the front feet but can affect all four.



X-ray of normal horses foot



X-ray of horses foot with severe

What are the signs?

In severe cases, animals will be unable to move. They will be very uncomfortable often leaning back on their heels, trying to take the weight off their front feet. If very severe they may often lie down to take the weight off their feet completely and often this can be mistaken for colic.

More commonly, milder cases signs can include:

- Increased pulses to the feet (where the digital artery runs over the fetlock), heat in the hooves and pain on pressure of the sole.
- Leaning backwards to take the weight off their front feet.
- Pottery or short strided gait or weight shifting.
- Signs of abnormal hoof growth: hoof rings wider at the heel.



What are the causes?

It has always been thought that access to lush pasture was the primary cause for laminitis. Research has shown that 90% of laminitis cases have an underlying hormonal cause and it is this that determines whether or not a horse will develop laminitis when turned out onto new pasture. There is a complex link between Equine Cushing's Disease (Pars Pituitary Intermedia Dysfunction – PPID), Equine Metabolic Syndrome and insulin resistance, three hormonal conditions that increase the risk of a horse or pony developing laminitis.

Equine Metabolic Syndrome (EMS) – these horses commonly have excess fat storage over their body and become insulin resistant. This condition can be diagnosed with an overnight fasting blood test after a high glucose meal and management tailored accordingly.

Equine Cushing's Disease – seen more often in older horses and ponies, although not exclusively. It is due to an enlargement of the pituitary gland at the base of the brain. This causes high levels of circulating ACTH and other hormones that can lead to laminitis. Other signs of Cushing's include an abnormal hair coat and delayed shedding, abnormal fat redistribution, patchy sweating, increased drinking and urination, lethargy and recurrent infections. This is diagnosed by a simple blood test and from June until October the laboratory tests to diagnose Cushing's Disease are free.

Diagnosis – What should I do if I suspect my horse has laminitis?

Sudden onset Laminitis is urgent. Prompt attention and treatment as soon as the signs are recognised are important to help alleviate pain and reduce any long-term damage. It is important to seek veterinary attention. While waiting for the vet, remove from pasture, provide deep bedding and ensure they can reach food (soaked hay) and water. As previously mentioned 90% of laminitis cases are caused by hormonal conditions so it is important that these are tested for.

How can we treat it?

Emergency treatment includes pain relief, restricting movement and supporting the foot to reduce the risk of pedal bone movement. Longer term treatment will address the painful symptoms and possibly include changes to farriery and management. Often x-rays of your horses feet can be helpful to assess the extent of the problem and enable the farrier to make any necessary corrections. It is also important to treat the underlying cause of the laminitis not just the signs themselves.

How can we prevent it?

It is really important to remember that laminitis is a multi-factorial problem. It is important to identify any underlying conditions to ensure horses and ponies can be managed appropriately to reduce the risks of further episodes of laminitis.

Talk about laminitis are again offering **FREE** lab fees on an initial ACTH blood test for any horse or pony who is suspected of having laminitis or PPID Cushing. The horse must not of had their ACTH tested before to qualify for this offer. Other charges do apply.

Please call the equine clinic on **01297 304007** to discuss this further with an Equine Vet or find out more information at:

<https://www.talkaboutlaminitis.co.uk/>



Open Evening Saturday 24th June 2017

Thank you to everyone who came to our Open Evening.

We had a fantastic turn out and hope you all enjoyed it.



EQUINE INFO

If you would like to speak to an Equine Vet or arrange a visit, please call us on our new number below

Medicines can be requested via email farm@axvets.co.uk or by telephone. Please allow 24hrs notice.



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We have a new number
01297 304007