



Laminitis

Laminitis is a painful and sometimes devastating condition affecting the feet and hooves of horses and ponies.

In the foot of a normal horse or pony, the pedal bone (the end most bone in the foot) and the hoof are tightly joined by a fine structure of tissue called laminae. The laminae, though very strong, are extremely fine and easily damaged. In the condition laminitis these laminae become inflamed and extremely painful, making weight bearing very difficult for affected horses.

Horses and ponies with laminitis find it very painful to put their feet down and often adopt a rocked back stance to ease the weight on the painful tissues.

If the condition goes on for a long time the damage to the laminae can be irreversible and the laminae can no longer support the bone inside the hoof which leads to rotation of this bone and permanent foot pain. In these severe cases euthanasia becomes the only option.

Risk factors for developing laminitis include access to lush grass, obesity and pre-existing medical conditions such as equine metabolic syndrome (EMS) and equine cushings disease (PPID).



Treatment

Treatment for laminitis is based on the individual horse/pony but may include:

- Pain relief medications
- Dietary restriction
- Corrective Farriery – frog support such as lilly pads may be used.