

Laminitis and Cushing's Disease

It is a common belief that laminitis in the spring is caused by access to lush pasture, especially if the horse or pony is overweight. However new research has demonstrated that 90% of laminitis cases are the result of an underlying hormonal condition, namely Cushing's disease (PPID) or Equine Metabolic Syndrome (EMS). Unless one of these conditions is present, grazing alone is unlikely to cause laminitis.

In order to correctly diagnose and treat such laminitis cases, it is important that horses and ponies with an underlying hormonal disease are identified. Laminitis has the potential to cause extensive damage to the feet even before clinical signs are evident. Early diagnosis and intervention are critical if the crippling changes that are seen in the disease are to be avoided. If your horse or pony is within the 90% that do have an underlying hormonal disease, then a clear diagnosis will enable us to treat the laminitis appropriately and help to prevent future painful episodes.

Cushing's disease (PPID) and EMS can be easily diagnosed by blood tests. If the results are positive then treatment with pergolide (Prasend) is usually very effective along with careful management of their diet (no sudden changes or access to excessively rich grass); and keeping the hooves well trimmed whether the pony is shod or not. Overgrown feet increase the strain on the laminae.

If you are concerned about laminitis or Cushing's or would like further information about any other equine service please contact our clinic at:

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Please visit our website for more information:
www.islevalleyvets.co.uk

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