



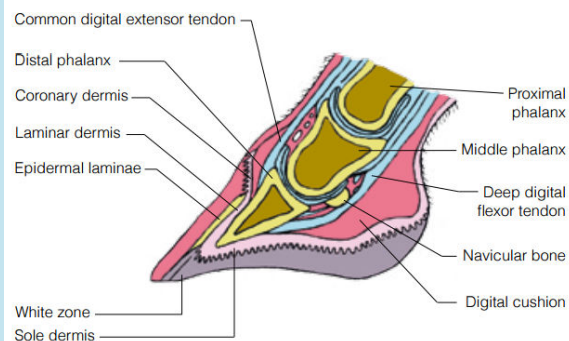
LAMINITIS- THE 10 WARNING SIGNS

The spring grass is starting to grow rapidly and we're experiencing sunny days and cold nights, during which the sugars in the grass increase significantly and pose a serious risk to horses that are susceptible to laminitis. Laminitis is an extremely painful inflammatory condition of the feet in which there is weakening of the sensitive tissues (laminae) that bond the hoof wall to the pedal bone within the hoof. It is characterised by lameness, usually sudden in onset, in one or more feet. Frequently both front feet are affected, but it can also affect hind feet. The laminae are interwoven, sensitive 'leaves' of tissue which suspend the pedal bone within the hoof. Laminitis is inflammation of these laminae which weakens them and can result in sinking or rotation of the pedal bone. To help you catch this devastating hoof disease we have created a list of 10 early warning signs. Regardless of the type of case (supporting-limb, systemic inflammatory response syndrome, or endocrine disease-related), these red flags could indicate laminitis is setting in, hopefully before you see any signs of lameness. If you see any of the below signs please call us, the sooner you catch laminitis the better.



IF YOU SEE ANY OF THESE SIGNS CALL US IMMEDIATELY ON 01584 841 080

1. A strong digital pulse
2. A hoof that's HOT for hours.
3. A distorted hoof shape or rings
4. An increased heart rate
5. Too little or too much foot lifting
6. Apparent stretched or bleeding laminae
7. A shortened stride
8. Increased insulin levels
9. Obesity
10. Diarrhoea or infection



KEY SIGNS OF LAMINITIS IN MORE DETAIL:

Feeling for a digital pulse. Run hand down limb to the fetlock & gently roll your fingers across the skin on either side at the back until a "tube" is felt to move under the skin. This is the vascular bundle. Gently hold your thumb/finger over until pulse can be felt. Normally this is very subtle but can be felt to "bound" strongly in laminitic horses.

Laminitis is characterised by lameness involving one or more feet which is often rapid in onset. Both front feet are usually affected, but hind feet can be involved as well. Occasionally, laminitis occurs in only one foot, often as a result of excessive load bearing due to a severe lameness of the opposite leg. Affected horses show a characteristic, 'pottery' gait landing with the heel first. The condition is much worse when the horse is walking on a firm surface or when turning. When resting, they often weight shift and stand with the hind limbs placed further underneath the body.

Physical examination usually identifies an increase of the digital pulse and often (but not always) the foot feels hot. Application of hoof testers to the sole in front of the frog will result in a painful response.

WHAT ELSE CAN YOU DO...

"Laminitis" is a smartphone App which was created to provide horse owners with a practical tool to help monitor weather conditions in a way that can be used to warn when grazing on grass poses an increased risk to horses prone to laminitis.

Local weather conditions are monitored and are used to predict the rise and fall of non-structural carbohydrates (NSC's) in grass. When the predicted NSC's increase, this is shown as a rise in risk, this is displayed on a very simple barometer screen on the app. If you have a horse that is at risk we would recommend using this tool. Whilst it cannot guarantee that you horse won't catch Laminitis it will help you in managing your horse and the risks. It should be used alongside our advice as an early warning tool to advise when grasses at the location you have selected are likely to be 'under stress' and therefore to have accumulated excess non-structural carbohydrates (NSC, i.e. sugars, starch or fructan) which could significantly increase the risk of a laminitic episode should it be grazed.



STAFF UPDATES AT SEVERN EDGE

Once again there are changes afoot within the team at Severn Edge Equine. We say goodbye and good luck to Emily, one of fabulous vets. Emily is heading to London to work with students at the Royal Veterinary College. Emily has been a brilliant member of the team at Severn Edge Equine and her love of teeth and all things dental will be hugely missed!

We are delighted to welcome Paula Hoppe who will be working on Monday's and Thursday's covering Emily's area. Paula has many years experience in mixed practice and emergency ambulatory equine care. We are sure that Paula will be a great addition to the team.



Finally, our super tech Nicky is getting married at the end of May. So when you see Nicky again she will be Mrs Rogers! We wish Nicky and Ed all the happiest and look forward to the pictures and the party.

SPRING EQUINE EMERGENICES

GRASS SICKNESS:

Equine grass sickness (EGS) can occur at any time of the year but is most often seen between April to July. The disease affects mainly grazing horses and currently the cause remains unclear. The disease mainly acts by disrupting the nerves that supply the gastrointestinal tract, hence affecting gut motility. However, other parts of the general nervous system are also affected.

WARNING SIGNS TO LOOK OUT FOR:

- Dull demeanour
- Muscle tremors
- Sweating
- Difficulty eating
- Excess salivation
- Eyelids appear droopy
- Increased heart rate
- Firm faecal balls with mucous coating



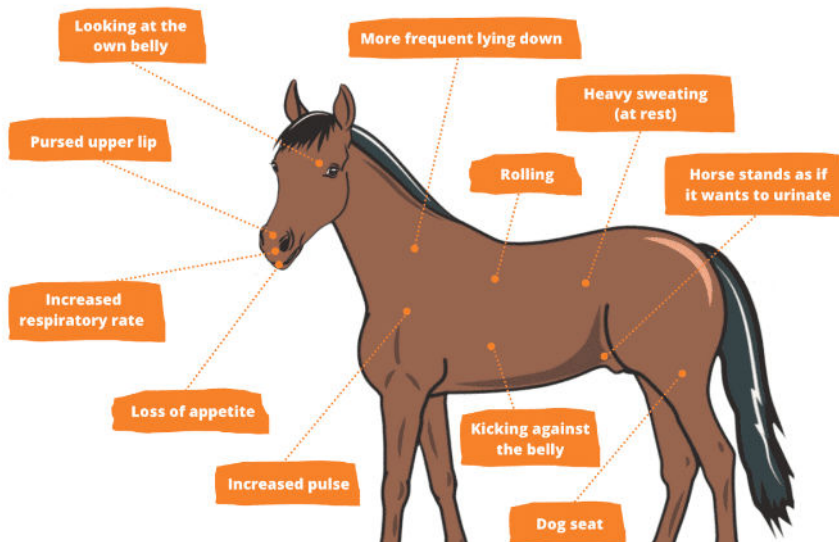
SEE THESE SIGNS?

Call us on 01584 841080



MINIMISING THE RISK OF GRASS SICKNESS:

- Try and limit exposure to pastures during high risk periods where previous cases have occurred
- Reduce the amount of soil disturbance from methods such as harrowing or mechanical faeces removal
- Encourage removal of faeces by hand
- In heavily grazed or sparse pastures offer supplementary forage
- Avoid sudden changes in diet Limit use of ivermectin based wormers
- Minimise the number of horses co-grazing, especially youngsters



COLIC:

Spring brings an increase in lush grass and so it is vital that you manage your horse's intake. Horses are usually fed hay and hard feed over the winter to keep weight on and so most horses come out of the winter looking rather well. They will not be used to the rich green grass and so it is important you gradually introduce them to the Spring grass slowly. Failure to do this may cause an upset of the horse's intestinal bacteria, which could lead to colic.

WARNING SIGNS: These are shown on the diagram

Signs can vary from mild to severe, and things can often change very quickly. It is important to know what is normal for your horse, so that you can be aware of any changes which may be an early sign of colic.

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