

Equine Laminitis

This is a painful condition of the hoof which can be the cause of sudden onset as well as chronic lameness in horses and ponies.

There are multiple causes including grain overload, excess grass/lush pasture in a susceptible pony, sepsis (infection) eg following colic, mechanical stress eg overworking on a hard surface, and underlying disease such as Equine Metabolic Syndrome or Equine PPID (formerly known as Cushing's).

The disease involves inflammation and stretching of the laminae, which are the delicate structures attaching the hoof wall onto the underlying tissue and bone. When laminitis is severe, this stretching and tearing can destabilise the hoof to the extent that the pedal bone (the bone within the hoof) rotates and/or sinks. In these cases, very strict nutritional management, gradual and regular corrective farriery, and treatment of any underlying cause of disease, is essential. In the most severely affected patients, it can take several months for full recovery and some ponies may never correct completely.

In acute cases of laminitis, pain relief, hoof support, box rest with deep bedding and feeding with soaked hay are important for treatment.

Horses and ponies that have Equine PPID are much more likely to suffer recurrent episodes of laminitis. This is a disease that is easy to diagnose from a single blood test, and there is a licensed treatment available which involves daily oral administration of tablets.

X-rays of the hoof are an important means of confirming a diagnosis of chronic laminitis, and helping with any subsequent corrective farriery. We are able to take x-rays of horse and ponies legs with our digital x-ray machine at our Egremont Surgery, copies can be taken away to show your farrier. We have ample room to access our car park with a vehicle and horse box.

