

Laminitis can be considered a risk at any time of year, but most commonly seen in Spring time. It is an extremely painful condition that affects a horse/pony's feet. The condition is characterised by inflammation of the laminae (the connective tissue holding the pedal bone to the hoof wall) causing instability of the structures within the hoof.

Clinical Signs

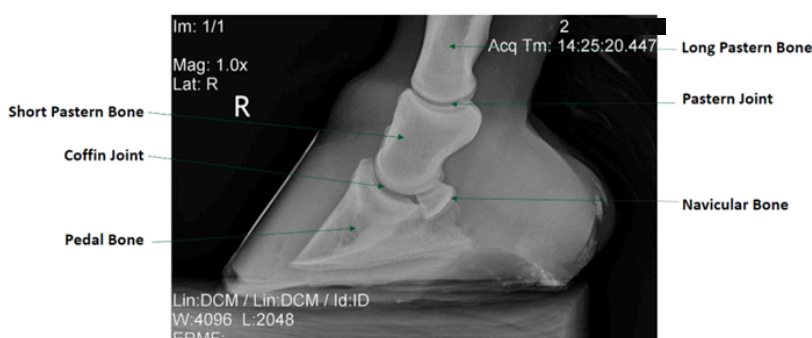
- Lameness or shortened, potterly gait
- Reluctance to move or turn
- Weight shifting
- Increased frequency lying down or inability to get up
- Rocked back stance
- Increased heat within the foot
- Altered growth of the hooves
- Tentative walking over stony/hard ground



Diagnosis: This is based upon the history and signalment, clinical examination findings including bounding digital pulses and any of the clinical signs mentioned above and results of diagnostic imaging including foot x-rays.

Testing for underlying conditions: Your vet might also recommend testing your horse to check for any underlying conditions including Cushing's disease (PPID) and Equine Metabolic Syndrome/insulin dysregulation.

Foot x-rays: Your vet might recommend taking foot x-rays to allow them to assess any changes that can occur to the pedal bone associated with laminitis (e.g. rotation or sinking) and to assist your farrier in trimming the feet to ensure good foot balance.



Treatment may include:

- Pain relief e.g. Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (Danilon or Equipalazone) or paracetamol.
- Strict box rest on a deep, comfortable bed covering the entire stable floor
- Dietary changes:
 - No access to grass
 - Soaked hay – we will advice to give 1.5% body weight in kg of dry hay in a 24 hour period, then this should be soaked for ideally 6-12 hours prior to feeding. The total amount of hay should then be split into multiple small hole hay nets given throughout the day.
 - Minimal hard feed – this should be <10% sugars and starch (ideally <5%). A low calorie balancer can be fed to ensure your horse is not lacking any vitamins or minerals.
- Identify and address any underlying disease process e.g. Cushing's disease or Equine Metabolic Syndrome (EMS)
- Remedial farriery (trimming and shoeing). We will work alongside your farrier or a recommended remedial farrier to address foot balance and support. This may involve different types of shoes from what your horse would normally wear.



Causes of laminitis:

1. Endocrine laminitis

- Cushing's disease (Pituitary Pars Intermedia Dysfunction (PPID))
- Equine Metabolic Syndrome (EMS)/Insulin Dysregulation
- Glucocorticoid (steroid) administration

2. Inflammatory (toxaemic) laminitis

3. Abnormal weight bearing (load bearing) laminitis