



- LAMINITIS -

Risk Factors, Causes and Management

What is it?

Laminitis is an inflammation of the laminae, the soft tissue structures that attach the pedal bone to the hoof wall. It occurs when blood flow to these laminae is disrupted. Inflammation often permanently weakens the laminae and damages the wall/bone bond. Laminitis is a veterinary emergency; it is very painful, and the sooner treatment begins the better prospect of recovery.

Signs of Laminitis

ACUTE LAMINITIS	CHRONIC LAMINITIS
Reluctance to move or hesitant gait	Dished hooves
A "sawhorse stance" with the front legs stretched out in front and the hind legs positioned under the horse	Bruised soles or "stone bruises"
Lameness, especially when a horse is turning in circles	Seedy toe - a wider white line
Heat in the hooves	Recurrent abscesses under the sole
Increased digital pulse in the lower leg	Dropped soles or flat feet
Pain on palpation of the coronary band and in the toe region when pressure is applied with hoof testers	Rings in hoof wall that become wider as they are followed from toe to heel

Risk Factors

- Breed (Ponies or heavy breeds such as draft horses)
- High body condition score
- High starch or sugar intakes
- Lush spring pasture or autumn flush
- Horses who have had previous episodes of laminitis
- Older horses with PPID (Cushing's disease)
- Insulin dysregulation (EMS)

Causes

Although laminitis occurs in the feet, the underlying cause is often a disturbance somewhere in the horse's body including;

- Nutritional (grain overload, lush pasture, change of diet)
- Metabolic (altered hormone levels)
- Mechanical (supporting limb laminitis)
- Toxic (high fever, metritis due to retained placenta, colitis, pleuritis)
- Concussion (road founder)
- Secondary (high doses of corticosteroids in the last month)

Laminitis can affect one or all the feet, but it is commonly seen in both front feet.

horses come first

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Treatment

If you suspect laminitis, consider it a medical emergency, and call your vet immediately.

This painful condition should be treated as soon as possible by your vet for a better prospect of recovery.

Treatment will depend on specific circumstances but may include:

- Diagnosis of the specific cause of the case and treatment of a primary disease.
- Removal from pasture and a diet analysis.
- Pain relief and anti-inflammatory therapy.
- If the horse has overeaten, purging with mineral oil via a nasogastric tube to purge the horse's digestive tract.

First Aid Tip

Stable your horse on soft ground like sand or shavings, which will encourage them to lie down to reduce the pressure on their weakened laminae.

Once a horse has had laminitis, it is likely to reoccur as the laminae never regain their original integrity and strength.

Ongoing Management

Extra care must be provided for any horse that has had laminitis:

- ✓ Routine hoof care, including trimming or therapeutic shoeing.
- ✓ Avoid grazing lush pastures.
- ✓ Restrict pasture intake during spring, autumn, or anytime the pasture suddenly greens up.
- ✓ Exercise can reduce insulin dysregulation.
- ✓ Monitor their body condition score and ensure they are a healthy weight. You can find this tool and others under the 'Resources' section of our website: **barastochorse.com.au**
- ✓ Feed a balanced diet of high quality, low sugar forage with easily digestible fibre such as **Speedi-Beet** and avoid excess carbohydrates.
- ✓ Feeding **Barastoc Calm Performer** will supply your horse with essential protein, minerals and vitamins.

