

# Laminitis

## What it is, how to diagnose it and how to manage it

### What is laminitis?

Laminitis is an inflammation of the sensitive laminae that support the pedal bone within the hoof. This inflammation is very painful and if not treated, can lead to separation of the pedal bone from the hoof wall.

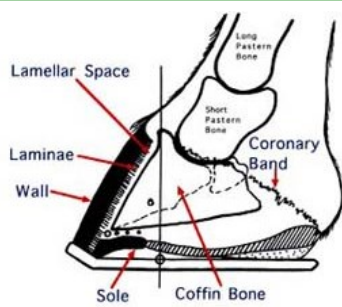


Photo from The Laminitis Site

### Why has my pony got laminitis?

Laminitis can be seen as a consequence of several other conditions: obesity, Cushing's, EMS, carbohydrate overload, inflammatory disease, steroid treatment or lameness in another limb. It is important to distinguish which is the cause in each case, so we can tailor our care plan to your pony.

### What are the signs of laminitis?

Symptoms of laminitis include:

- Lameness
- Weight-shifting
- Classic 'leaning back' stance
- Hot feet with bounding digital pulses



*A pony with laminitis showing the classic 'leaning back' stance*

Photo from World Horse Welfare

### How do we treat laminitis?

The core treatment strategy for laminitis is always the same and includes:

- Anti-inflammatories (e.g. bute)
- Box-rest, on a deep bed (at least 20cm of sand or shavings)

There are also other therapies that we use on an individual case basis:

- Sole support systems (applied by the vet or farrier)
- Ice baths of the feet in the early stages
- ACP

### How do we diagnose laminitis?

We make a diagnosis of laminitis based on clinical signs when we examine your pony. We can also use x-rays to look at the position of the pedal bone within the foot to look for changes, such as rotation.



*An x-ray showing rotation of the pedal bone*

Photo from NADIS

### What else do I need to do to manage my pony with laminitis?

There are several other conditions that can make your pony more prone to developing laminitis, and it is worth investigating these further in some patients. Ponies with Cushing's or Equine Metabolic Syndrome are at higher risk of developing laminitis. Both these diseases can be diagnosed with a blood test and managed with medication to try and reduce the risk of another bout of laminitis. Obesity is also a key factor in developing laminitis, so it is worth evaluating your pony's weight and feeding regime with your vet.

Early detection of a bout of laminitis is also very important so we can treat them ASAP to minimise damage to the feet.

All ponies that suffer from laminitis will need regular farriery work, often in conjunction with x-rays, to keep their feet comfortable.

### What is the prognosis for my pony when it is diagnosed with laminitis?

Laminitis is a serious condition, and if we can't keep the pony comfortable or there is severe damage to the feet then euthanasia can be the best option. However, in the majority of cases it is manageable and the pony can return to soundness.

If you are worried that your horse or pony may have laminitis, please give us a call at the Centre on 01977 652280 as they will need to be seen as soon as possible by a vet