

Laminitis - Prevention is Better than Cure!

Laminitis is a complex disease where the laminae in the hoof, which are the structures responsible for suspending the horse's coffin bone from the hoof wall, become inflamed. When the laminae inflame they lose their integrity, and allow the weight of the horse to drive the pedal bone downward through the hoof, damaging arteries, veins, the corium of the coronet and the sole of the hoof. Once the pedal bone moves the condition is then referred to as founder. Laminitis causes severe pain and in many situations, euthanasia is the only humane option. Laminitis is the second most common cause of death in horses worldwide and is something horse owners never want to see their horses go through.

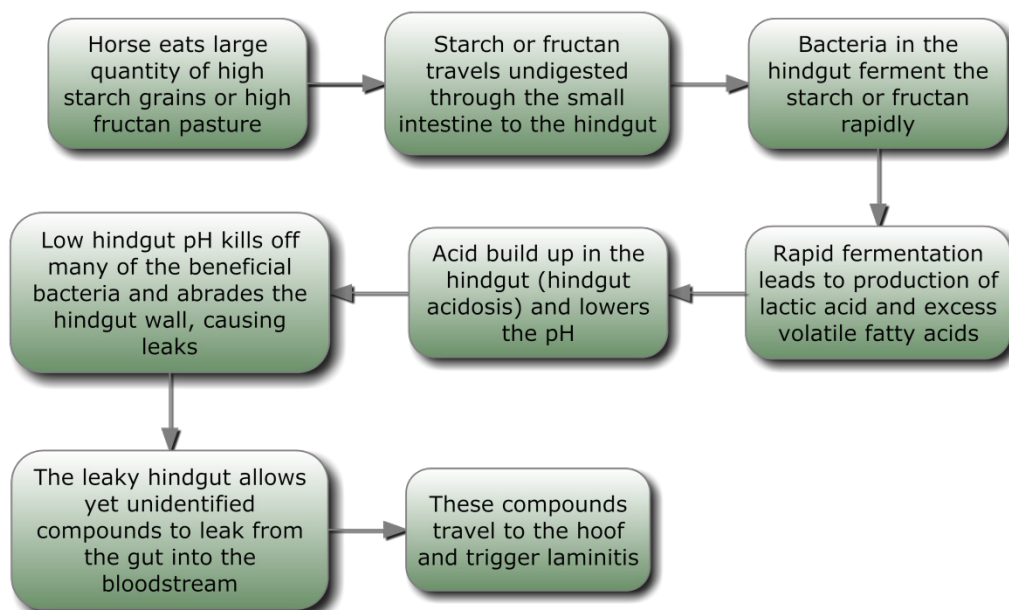
The good news for you and your horses is that laminitis is largely preventable and there is much you can do as a horse owner to prevent it from ever happening. The key to prevention is understanding what causes laminitis and avoiding the feeds and situations that may put your horses at risk.

What Causes Laminitis?

The most common causes of laminitis are diet related:

1. The overfeeding of high starch feeds or feeds that contain fructan

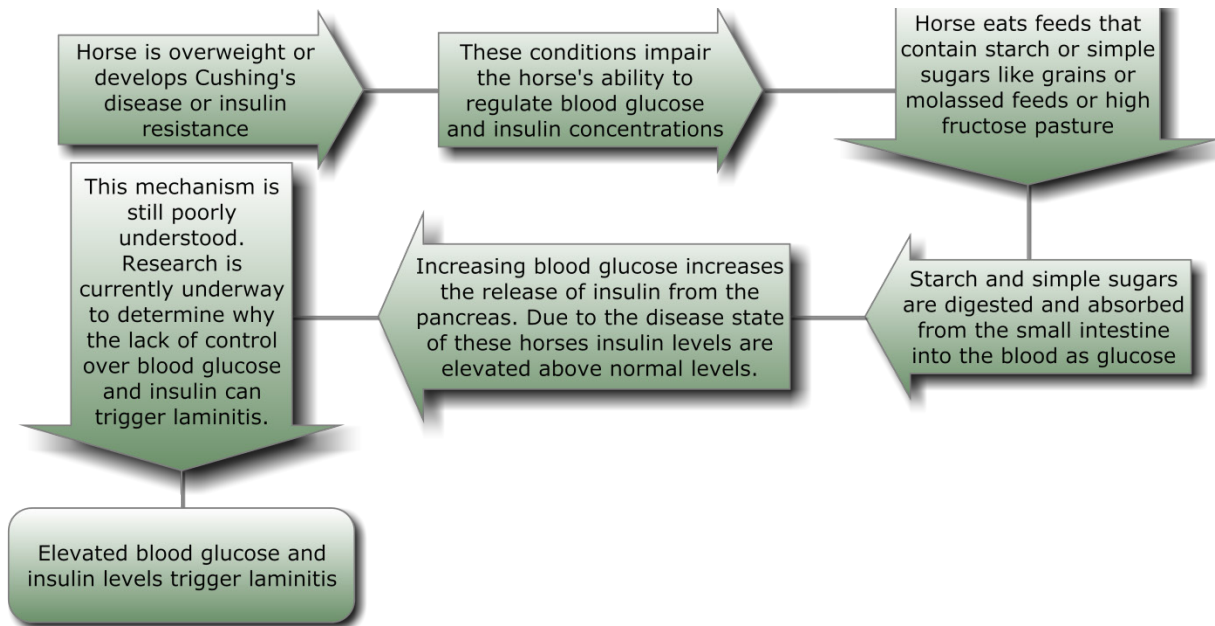
All horses are susceptible to this form of laminitis. The diagram below explains how laminitis is caused by starch and fructan.



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2. Feeding high starch or high sugar feeds to horses that have an impaired ability to regulate blood glucose and insulin concentrations

Horses that can't accurately regulate their blood glucose and insulin concentrations are susceptible to this form of laminitis. The diagram below explains how this form of laminitis, commonly termed endocrinopathic laminitis occurs.



How can laminitis be prevented?

Laminitis is a preventable disease. Incorporating the following points into your equine management practices will help you prevent your horses developing laminitis:

- Don't let your horse get overweight. Horses carrying excess weight are more likely to have insulin resistance and are thus more susceptible to laminitis.
- Use forage and high energy fibers such as copra, un-molassed sugarbeet pulp and soybean hulls to meet your horses energy (calorie) requirements where possible.
- Only use grains or grain based feeds if absolutely necessary to top up your horses energy requirement.
- If you do choose to feed grain, only feed grains that have been extruded, steam flaked or micronized and don't exceed 0.5% bodyweight of grain per meal (2 kg/meal for a 400 kg horse). This will reduce the risk of starch being delivered undigested to the hindgut.
- NEVER feed grain or grain based feeds to overweight horses, horses with Cushing's disease or insulin resistance or horses that have previously had laminitis.

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- If you do need to put weight on a horse with Cushing's disease or insulin resistance use a low starch, low sugar feed like copra meal, un-molassed sugarbeet pulp or soybean hulls.
- Be vigilant with the type of pasture and hay you feed as forages can have high levels of fructan (which can cause acidosis related laminitis) and simple sugars like glucose and sucrose (which can trigger endocrinopathic laminitis).
- If you are concerned about the levels of these carbohydrates in your pasture or hay you should have the level of non-structural carbohydrates (NSC) measured to determine if they are safe to feed your horse.
- If you are concerned about non-structural carbohydrate levels in your pasture, only allow your horse to graze in the very early hours of the morning when NSC levels are lowest.
- Temperate pasture species like ryegrass and herbs like chicory and plantain accumulate the highest levels of NSC and should be avoided.
- Lucerne hay has been known to trigger laminitis in some horses with metabolic disorders. Lucerne is typically a low NSC hay and this makes it useful for horses at risk of, or suffering with laminitis; but you need to be careful and introduce it very slowly into your horses diet if you haven't fed it before. Cease feeding it immediately if any negative effects are observed.
- And finally, always ensure you are feeding a balanced diet that meets your horse's requirement for energy, protein, vitamins and minerals. Feeding a balanced diet will improve your horses overall health which will help to reduce its risk of developing diseases including laminitis.

CoolStance Premium Copra Meal

CoolStance copra is a safe feed for all horses including those suffering with, or at risk of laminitis. CoolStance copra contains less than 1% starch and less than 10% non-structural carbohydrate (NSC), meaning it will not cause acidosis related or endocrinopathic laminitis.

CoolStance copra contains digestible fiber and oils, making it a high energy feed suitable for all types of horses that need that bit extra in their diet.

CoolStance can also be fed safely to horses with Cushing's disease and insulin resistance or horses that have previously suffered with laminitis.

Remember, only feed CoolStance if your horse needs it ... good weight management is one of the keys to preventing laminitis!

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