

Your Horse has Laminitis

Thanks for caring enough to learn how to take better care of your horse.

Laminitis is when the Velcro that holds your horse's hoof and bones together gets inflamed and comes apart. When it's bad, it feels like if you slammed all your fingers in a car door. If it gets real bad, the bones can come right out the bottom of the foot. He may not be that bad yet, but this could kill him if you don't get after it now.

Your trimmer or farrier can help your horse be more comfortable with frequent trims or special shoes. Your vet can have his blood tested for Cushing's and insulin and maybe give you medicine to help fix him. But nobody can fix this horse's feet until you fix his diet. It is up to you whether this horse gets better, or keeps suffering. There is a lot of new science about laminitis. We now know that it happens to certain horses and ponies when they eat too much sugar or starch. We now know that what you feed this horse can either fix him, or kill him. Here's some simple rules to follow to help him get better:

- No grain at all. Not even a handful.
- Nothing with sugar or starch- no cookies, candy, carrots, apples
- If you feel sorry and want to give him a treat, brush him real good.
- Having your feet hurt that bad all day is not worth eating a carrot or some grain.
- **Keep him off green grass and weeds until he is sound.** Green grass and weeds can have a lot of sugar in them. He can't have even spindly, poor grass. Put him in a round pen, corral or dry lot. If you don't have one, make one by putting your whole herd in a corner of the pasture and let them eat it and trample it down to dirt.
- Feed him only hay that has been soaked underwater for a couple hours to get some of the sugar out. If he don't like it, he isn't hungry enough yet.

If he gets sound again, it isn't over. He's likely to get it again, worse next time.

- Only let him have a couple hours of pasture at a time.
- Keep him in the woods where the grass is in the shade. That makes the sugar real low.
- Don't let him have any grass at all when it's cold at night. That makes the sugar in the grass a lot higher. Feed him only hay in the corral spring and fall.
- Get the fat off him and don't ever let him get fat again. Seeing a touch of rib is not a bad thing on a horse or pony that gets laminitis.
- Exercise him several times a week, as long as he's sound.
- Don't ever give him grain again. It's like giving ice cream to someone with diabetes.
- If someone else thinks about feeding him grain or treats, offer to slam their fingers in a car door and see if they think it's worth it.
- Don't let his feet get too long. Tend to his feet at least every 8 weeks.

If you decide that this is too much to deal with, in the name of merciful Jesus, give him a quick death and don't let him suffer in endless pain.

For more information, go to www.safergrass.org