

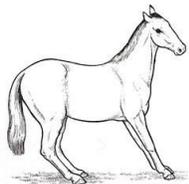
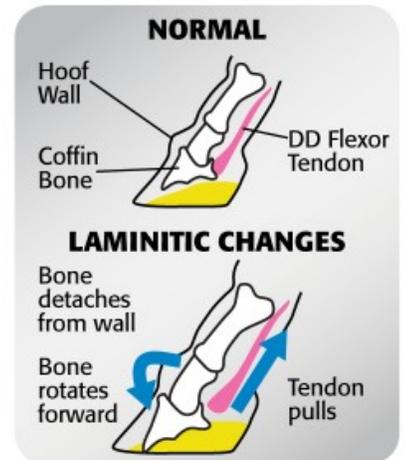
Laminitis

What is it?

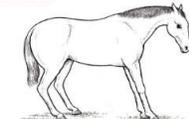
Laminitis is, by definition, inflammation of the laminae, the structures that attach the hoof wall to the coffin bone. In extreme cases, the bone can separate from the hoof capsule (termed “rotation”) or actually sink through the bottom of the foot. Certain breeds like Morgans and ponies may be predisposed. Horses with Equine Metabolic Syndrome or Cushing’s disease are also at a much higher risk.

Clinical Signs

Most horses tend to be very painful with laminitis. They might refuse to move, walk very gingerly like they are “on eggshells”, be reluctant to pick up a leg, exhibit a saw-horse like stance to remove pressure on the front or back limbs, or lay down excessively. Laminitis occurs in the front feet most often, but all 4 feet can be affected. Hooves might be warm to the touch and digital pulses will be increased. They will usually be positive to hoof testers in the toe area.



Characteristic stance of a horse with laminitis in all four feet



Characteristic stance of a horse with laminitis in the front feet

Diagnosis

Diagnosis is generally made based on clinical signs and physical exam. In some cases, radiographs may be recommended to look for signs of rotation or sinking of the bone within the hoof capsule.

Treatment

The mainstays of treatment for laminitis are aimed at reducing inflammation and addressing pain. Bute, Banamine and Equioxx are the three medications we prescribe most often. It is recommended to check with your veterinarian for a dosage before administering. Changing the biomechanics of the feet will help to decrease the pull of the deep digital flexor tendon on the coffin bone, which helps to prevent rotation. Boots such as Soft-Rides® or Easyboot® help to elevate the heel, support the frog and provide a cushion for the feet. Other options include foam pads or Lily Pads that can be taped to the feet for short-term usage. Cold hosing or icing can help decrease inflammation. Providing a deeply bedded stall with 6 inches of shavings or a pile of sand to stand in can also make them more comfortable.

After the initial inflammation is controlled, it may be necessary to make shoeing changes to address any rotation concerns. Nutritional management, Weight loss, and Proper hoof care are crucial for long-term maintenance and prevention of recurrence.



Please feel free to call us with any questions!

Auburn Equine
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