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## Equine Cushing's Disease

Equine Cushing's Disease is often described more accurately as PPID (Pituitary Pars Intermedia Dysfunction), a hormonal dysfunction in horses.

PPID causes the horse's pituitary gland to produce an excess of hormones. Hormones normally exist in a fine balance to help regulate bodily functions. Hormonal imbalances caused by PPID can have devastating consequences to a horse such as laminitis.

PPID can affect any horse or pony regardless of breed, age or gender. Because the disease progresses slowly, early signs can be difficult to spot. Sometimes, we may think our horse is just getting older or having a few "off" days, when they really have a hidden condition that's causing them not to be themselves.

Signs of PPID vary widely and may be mild or severe. Your horse may show several signs of disease or only one, so it's best to check with your vet if you notice unusual changes in your horse,

**The three most common signs that may indicate that your horse has PPID include:**

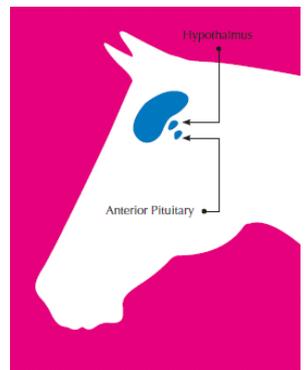
- An abnormal hair coat (such as long patches of hair that doesn't shed)
- Unexplained lameness (laminitis)
- A pot belly or fat pouches around the eyes or tail head

If your horse or pony has PPID, the symptoms can be treated and managed. This could help reduce the risk of further painful episodes.

**Additional signs that your horse may have PPID include:**

- Excessive or abnormal sweating
- Increased appetite
- Increased drinking
- Increased urination
- Muscle loss
- Slow to heal wounds and more frequent infections
- Dental problems
- Lack of energy or poor performance

You can help a lot by watching for early signs of PPID and asking your vet to perform an examination of your horse if you spot any of them. This examination would include a full physical examination and test to measure blood levels of various hormones. This test could help confirm the presence or absence of PPID.



If your vet does find that your horse has PPID there are supportive care and treatment options available to help keep your horse healthy and happy for many years.

Your vet may advise simple steps including regular hoof care, dental care, hair clipping and changes in diet to help keep your horse looking and feeling great.

Your vet may also prescribe a medication, and if so you will need to give it to your horse on a daily basis. Signs of PPID will generally improve within 6-12 weeks of commencing treatment and additional testing may be required to help monitor the success of treatment.

If PPID remain untreated your horse could develop clinical signs which could make it impossible for you and your horse to enjoy quality time together. Of all the conditions associated with PPID, laminitis has the most potential to impact your horse's life. It's not only common, it's extremely painful and affects the feet and hooves of horses and ponies.



If you have any further questions please make an appointment with your Veterinarian or ask one of our friendly staff members.