

White Lodge Equine Clinic

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Welcome to our Autumn/ Winter Newsletter!

Massive congratulations to our vet Ashley on her beautiful baby boy Archie, welcomed into the world at the end of August at a whopping 10 lb 8oz!!!!

We are also sad to see vet Hannah jetting off on her travels to New Zealand and warmer climates.

New Product Alert!

Muscle & Focus is suitable for horses and ponies requiring stamina, focus and support for healthy muscle development and recovery.

Suitable for horses competing at higher levels or maintaining a leisure riding career.

High quality protein source, Free from alfalfa, soya, molasses, and whole cereal grains, low in starch and sugar, ideal for equines prone to gastric ulcers



Sycamore Poisoning- Atypical Myopathy

Atypical myopathy is a life-threatening condition caused by a toxin in the Sycamore tree. The disease usually occurs in Autumn, when the trees shed their leaves and seeds. The toxin stops energy production in muscle cells, particularly the heart and respiratory muscles. Affected horses may look as though they are tying up or colicing. The level of toxin in each plant varies, as does each horse's tolerance to the toxin. Young horses and those on overgrazed pasture will be at higher risk.

Clinical Signs

- Sweating
- Reluctance to walk, muscle weakness, muscle tremors, collapse
- Depression or change in behaviour
- Signs of colic but still eating
- Increased or laboured breathing rate
- Dark urine (red or brown colour)



Treatment

Only 20-30% of horses will survive this condition. Immediate veterinary attention is vital. Your vet is likely to refer your horse for 24-hour medical management, intravenous fluid therapy and pain relief.

Prevention

Prevention is better than cure, especially in Atypical Myopathy! Here are a few tips on how to minimise the risk:

- Fence off areas close to sycamore trees
- Avoid over-grazing fields
- Ensure adequate forage in field (i.e. hay) and feed in hay racks/haynets to avoid fallen seeds and seedlings
- Know the signs and monitor your horse closely
- Mow seedlings in the spring and collect the cuttings as the toxin remains in the plant material
- You can test for the presence of the toxin in your own pasture.

Even if your pasture contains sycamore trees and has been grazed by horses for many years without a problem, this does not mean it is safe

Mud Fever - Pastern Dermatitis

Pastern dermatitis or “mud fever” is the term used to describe inflammation of the skin of the lower limbs. This is usually caused by bacteria that overgrow in wet conditions.

Clinical Signs

- Usually the fetlock to pastern area, particularly in hindlimbs
- Scabs, thickening of skin
- Hair loss
- Reddening of the skin
- Swelling
- Production of flaky, greasy material is particularly common in feathered breeds
- Oozing or purulent discharge



Risk Factors

The skin acts as a natural barrier for bacteria. This barrier is broken when the skin is chronically wet and becomes damaged. Bacteria then penetrate and multiply. The bacteria like to hide under the scabs that are formed. It is therefore important to remove the scabs when possible.

Horses standing in wet, muddy conditions will be more susceptible. It also occurs more often in horses with white hair and/or pink skin at the pastern region. Regular washing of limbs, especially without drying afterwards, also increases the risk of developing mud fever. Furthermore, unhygienic conditions provide the perfect environment for bacteria.

Treatment

- ◇ Clipping the areas allows oxygen to the skin and allows quicker drying
- ◇ Removing scabs and crusts is important to expose the bacteria to air and antibacterials. Removal of scabs may be painful and your horse may need sedating to do this
- ◇ Use of antibacterial washes such as diluted chlorhexidine (Hibi scrub) will help eliminate the bacteria. It is important to dry the skin with a clean towel afterwards
- ◇ Keeping the horse in a clean, dry environment is essential. Without this, treatment is often futile
- ◇ Some sulphur-containing powders are helpful to apply after drying. Sulphur is a natural antibacterial and the powder dries the skin and hair
- ◇ Avoid use of creams and potions, these can sometimes irritate the skin further
- ◇ Re-occurrence is common and permanent management changes are often required to manage the condition. Particularly in winter months.
- ◇ Your vet may prescribe anti-inflammatories and pain relief. Some circumstances require systemic antimicrobial therapy

There are other, specific causes of inflammation of the skin in the distal limb, including fungal infection, photosensitivity, immune-mediated disease and mange.

If you are concerned, please discuss with your vet