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PPID - Not just when your horse looks like a Teddy bear

Would you recognize PPID (Equine Cushing's disease) in your horse or pony?

What is all the current talk about PPID (Equine Cushing's disease)? Today, Equine Cushing's Disease is known as PPID (Pituitary Pars Intermedia Dysfunction) and is a common hormonal dysfunction in horses. It can affect as many as 1 in 7 horses and ponies over the age of 15, but can occasionally be seen in younger horses too.



In horses affected by PPID, the pituitary gland produces an excess of hormones which can cause imbalances in a number of your horse's normal bodily functions. This can cause a whole range of problems that vary in severity according to how far the disease has progressed.

What should you be watching out for?

The most common signs and symptoms for late stage PPID include changes to the hair coat, changes in your horse's body conformation (unusual areas of fat deposits / muscle wasting / rounded abdomen) and laminitis. Laminitis, also referred to as founder or sinker, has the greatest potential to impact your horse's quality of life; laminitis is a painful condition that affects the feet and hooves of horses and ponies.

PPID signs and symptoms are diverse and vary in severity according to the disease stage. Here is a more inclusive list of some of the signs you might see:

Early

- * Decreased athletic performance
- * Change in attitude/lethargy
- * Delayed haircoat shedding
- * Increased areas of hairiness
- * Change in body conformation
- * Regional fat deposits (e.g. neck)
- * Laminitis
- * Infertility



Advanced

- * Lethargy
- * Generalized hairiness (hypertrichosis/hirsutism)
- * Loss of seasonal haircoat shedding
- * Recurrent infections (e.g. sole abscesses or sinus infections)



monitor the effects of medication.

How do we treat PPID?

Your veterinarian can work with you to help manage your horse's health. Once your veterinarian has a diagnosis then a treatment plan for your horse's PPID can be started, which may be as simple as starting an easily administered daily medication and dietary adjustment. Other horses will require management of secondary problems such as laminitis if present.

When effective treatment and management is started early, horses with PPID can expect to enjoy many healthy, quality years to come.

For more information go to:
www.talkaboutlaminitis.com.au

- * Neurologic deficits (e.g. blindness)
- * Abnormal sweating (increased or decreased)
- * Absent reproductive cycle / infertility
- * Skeletal muscle atrophy
- * Regional fat deposits
- * Increased drinking and urinating
- * Laminitis
- * Rounded abdomen

What should I do if I think my horse/pony has PPID?

You can help a lot by watching for early signs of PPID and contacting your veterinarian if you think your horse needs to be checked. A simple blood test can help diagnose PPID. For this test a single blood sample is taken to measure the level of the hormone ACTH which is abnormally high in horses that suffer from PPID. This test is most sensitive at diagnosing early PPID if performed in the autumn but can be performed at any time. The test is also used to help



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