

Spring is here and the grass is getting greener on both sides of the fence!
Be proactive, let's prevent laminitis flare ups.

Is your horse at risk?

In the spring the horses most at risk to develop laminitis or founder are the horses with a Body Condition Score of greater than 6 (to view a BCS score sheet [click here](#)), or horses with a previous history of laminitis or un-regulated PPID (Cushings disease). Most horses at risk for laminitis should have their calorie intake limited, and sugar and starch intake reduced as much as possible.

Pasture is the most common source of sugar and starch in a horse's diet and by reducing or eliminating the grass intake we can prevent most laminitis flare-ups. If you have a laminitic horse that is not overweight you should consult HEHC to discuss feeding recommendations.

Options for limiting sugar and starch intake...

The grazing muzzle

We have many horses in our practice that wear grazing muzzles as soon as the grass starts turning green in the spring and until the very last blade of grass is brown in the fall. If you are not familiar with what a grazing muzzle is, allow us to explain. It is made of nylon and rubber, there is a small round hole in the bottom allowing the horse to graze but limiting the amount of green grass the horse can consume. The Standard Grazing Muzzle comes in multiple sizes, attaches to the breakaway halter of your choice with four velcro strips, and with a little effort on your part, can allow your horse pasture turnout while reducing the risk of laminitis or founder. For horses at risk of developing laminitis, or who have experienced mild bouts of laminitis, the grazing muzzle is a great option.

The Dry lot or stall

If you don't use a grazing muzzle, or the grazing muzzle does not reduce the grass intake enough, then at risk horses must be kept in a stall or dry lot. This is a much larger management commitment for most horse owners. Laminitic horses should have stalls or dry lots cleaned of feces daily to assist in good hoof health, and the feeding requirements of these horses can also get complicated. Multiple small meals must be fed each day to minimize boredom and stall vices such as wood-chewing or weaving and to maintain gastro-intestinal health and on occasion special diets must be fed.

If you have questions about how to care for your laminitic horse please call the office. We are happy to discuss the options available and help you select the right solution for your horse.