



Keeping chickens

With the recent changes to the law regarding layer hens, the price of eggs has gone up, the availability of eggs has gone down and many are looking to keep chickens in their back yards. This sounds like an easy cheap solution but remember these birds do need care and attention.

There are many good resources on line that can help with the care of your chickens. Some of these are listed below:

<https://chooks.co.nz/pages/keeping-chickens>

<https://goodmagazine.co.nz/keeping-chickens/>

<https://thisnzlife.co.nz/the-ultimate-resource-for-raising-your-chickens-well-how-to-start-what-to-feed-them-how-to-keep-them-healthy/>

You will need to provide the hens with a safe shelter with perches where they can roost at night, cover to get out of the rain and sun and be safe from predators like hawks, dogs and hedgehogs (eat the eggs). This area needs to be big enough so they can move around freely.

They also need a daily food supply of a commercial chicken food that will provide all the nutrients needed to lay eggs, or food scraps, green vegetables and grains, or a combination of all.

Fresh water is essential and you will need to make sure it is changed regularly to stay fresh and clean.

Access to a quiet place to lay their eggs is also needed along with an area to scratch and dust bathe to help keep external parasites at bay.



Some councils don't allow the keeping of roosters so check before you get one. It might also pay to check with your neighbours as chickens can be a bit smelly and noisy in some situations.

Chickens make really good pets to have around and have quirky characters that are entertaining and lovable.

Laminitis & Founder explained

What is laminitis?

Laminitis is a crippling disorder of the feet, resulting from damage to the sensitive soft tissues known as 'laminae' which connect the skeletal pedal bone to the inside of the hoof wall. There are about 600 interlocking laminae in each hoof and they provide the support for the weight of the horse.

What is founder?

Founder is the physical change that occurs within the hoof as a result of laminitis. When the laminae are damaged their supporting function is weakened. This may allow the pedal bone within the hoof to 'sink' downwards and 'rotate' backwards due to the weight of the horse pushing downwards on the bone and the upward pull of the flexor tendon which attaches to the base of the bone. Damage to the laminae can lead to abnormal hoof growth with obvious 'growth rings', long toes, flat soles and separation of the sole from the hoof wall at the white line (often followed by 'seedy toe').

What causes laminitis and founder?

One of the more common causes of laminitis is overeating of feeds rich in 'soluble carbohydrates' also referred to as non-structural carbohydrates or NSC (mainly found in cereal grains and lush/stressed pasture).

Laminitis can also result from endocrine disorders such as equine Cushing's disease or equine metabolic syndrome. Gastrointestinal problems such as colic, diarrhoea, retained placenta after foaling, metritis, pneumonia, peritonitis, enteritis etc. can also result in laminitis. Laminitis can also be caused by certain drugs and management factors such as standing for long periods in trucks or floats and by excessive work on hard surfaces for example hoof concussion from galloping or jumping on hard surfaces.

Do only fat horses or ponies founder?

No - All horses can develop laminitis and founder although pasture-associated laminitis is more common in ponies. Certain breeds are known to have a higher risk of developing laminitis. Obese horses and ponies are more likely to experience pedal bone rotation and permanent hoof damage due to the extra weight their feet have to support even in a relatively mild case of laminitis.



Can repeat attacks of founder occur?

Yes. Once a horse has foundered it is likely to suffer from continued repeated attacks. These horses can become very sensitive to the carbohydrates in feed, which may trigger a founder episode with only small amounts of grain or lush pasture. Symptoms of laminitis can also occur if the horse's hooves are not kept correctly trimmed or the animal is worked on hard surfaces.

Laminitis is the second biggest killer of horses after colic.

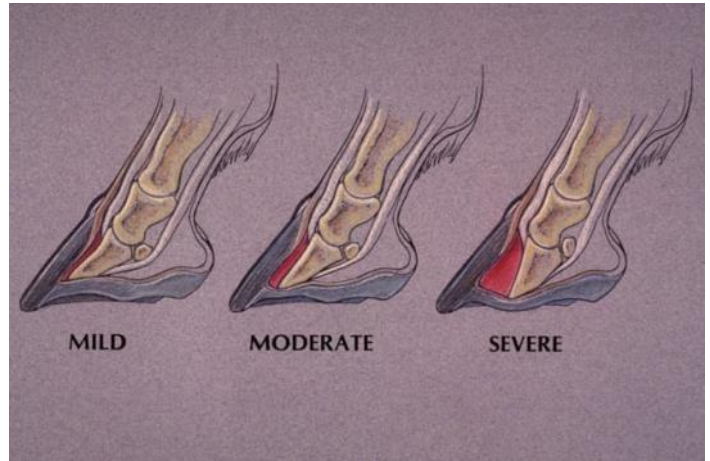
Of all the common lameness problems that affect horses and ponies, laminitis and founder are

most feared by horse owners. Horses that have suffered from laminitis remain susceptible to the disease. Even if you have never experienced laminitis in your horse before, now is the time to make preventative changes in order to minimise your horse's chances of succumbing to this potentially fatal disease.

Clinical signs of laminitis

Laminitis most commonly affects the forefeet of the horse. This is because approximately 65% of the horse's weight is carried through the forequarters. However, laminitis can also occur in the hind feet. Usually both front feet are affected, but laminitis may also occur only in one hoof or in all four feet simultaneously.

- Shifting weight from one hoof to another ("paddling")
- Lameness at the walk or trot, especially when the horse turns sharply
- Palpable heat in the hooves
- Increased pulses in the digital arteries over the fetlock
- Decreased mobility, or a reluctance to walk. Affected horses will often lie down.
- Pain with thumb or hoof tester pressure over the toe region of the sole
- Abnormal "sawhorse" stance, with the front hooves placed further forward than normal so that the heels carry more weight than the toes.
- Fluid accumulation and swelling (oedema) of the lower legs
- Increased heart rate and respiratory rate
- Trembling, sweating and visible distress
- Bruised soles
- Widened white line
- Dropped soles, squashed heels or flat hooves
- Dished hooves



- Abnormal hoof growth, usually with rings or grooves around the hoof wall
- Thick "cresty" neck
- Unnaturally long shaggy haircoat that doesn't shed at the usual times

HEART HEALTH IN PETS

Just like humans, a pet's heart can also develop diseases and cause many health problems. Unfortunately, any diseases or problems with the heart, seem to come to light when your pet is already in heart failure as the physical symptoms become obvious. We can look out for our pet by keeping an eye on the signs and being proactive in treating them. In many cases, the way we can help our pet's heart, will help our own as well.

The development of heart disease

Heart problems can be hereditary in pets; however, this is less common in both cats and dogs. The positive in this situation is that the pet will be diagnosed when young. This means that proper care and regular check-ups are already in motion to keep track of the health problem. Later in life, heart disease can develop due to the aging of the pet or other existing health conditions such as dental infections or, more commonly in cats, an overactive thyroid. These conditions can be confirmed and diagnosed by your veterinarian. Through regular check-ups and a management plan, you can help your pet live a joyful and comfortable life.



What are the signs of heart disease?

Heart disease basically means that the heart has started to reduce its normal function. Therefore, the heart has to work double-time to try to fight through and without treatment, will start to fail. The signs caused by heart disease include: Loss of appetite; Noticeable weight loss; Strained or rapid heart beat; Agitation; Weakness during exercise and tire easily; Coughing, usually at night; Enlarged abdomen; Irregular urination and defaecation; Depression

YOU can help prevent heart disease

Healthy diet: High-quality pet food is vital for their overall health, especially when it comes to keeping a healthy and strong heart. We recommend a diet that includes omega-3 fatty acid. The best option would be to talk to your vet or vet nurse about the best diet for your pet.

Maintain a healthy weight: Always try to keep your pet at a lean weight. A larger sized animal means that there is extra fat surrounding the heart. As a result, the heart is working harder due to this unwanted pressure.

Regular exercise: For dog owners, this is a perfect way to give both you and your pet's heart muscles some time to strengthen. Getting outdoors works wonders for physical and mental health. Animals like cats can be encouraged to get active through toys such as furry toy mice or fluffy toys.

Dental care: Any bacteria that develops in your pet's mouth can travel through the bloodstream and cause extreme damage to the heart, in particular the valves. Regular check-ups are important; however, you can also brush your pet's teeth with a specially designed toothbrush and tooth paste. Do not use human toothpaste on animals due to the sodium fluoride. This is extremely dangerous for pets.

For humans and animals, healthy hearts are the key to a long life. Now is the perfect opportunity to start getting active, to help you both stay in tip top shape.