

# Horse fact sheets – Ailments



## FOUNDER OR LAMINITIS.

This is inflammation of the membrane between the horny wall of the hoof and the pedal bone and sensitive inner parts of the hoof. Inflammation always causes swelling, but here there is no place to swell because of the hard hoof. The result is great pressure on all the nerves and so, great pain. It is a similar effect to a splinter under the human nail.

The most usual cause of founder is the horse or pony getting too fat. He has too much nourishing food and is not having enough exercise to use up the extra energy produced. This upsets the normal functions of the body. It is not clearly known just why this effects the feet but that is undoubtedly what happens.

The membrane, which is affected, is the support keeping the pedal bone in position, so it is very serious when this ceases to function correctly. The whole shape of the foot is distorted and can never be brought back to its proper state. The sole, instead of being arched upwards, drops to be flat or even arched downwards. Even when inflammation and pain have been reduced, the foot is always sensitive because of the nearness to the ground. The shock absorbing functions of the foot is greatly impaired by the alteration of its shape.

Obviously the way to prevent the pony from foundering is to watch his condition closely and cut down with his ration drastically before he is too fat. Feel his crest and if this is getting harder than usual, he is dangerously fat. When the grass in his paddock is good he should be shut up, given a little meadow hay and only allowed out to graze for one-hour morning and night. It is quite useless to shut him up for 12 hours and then let him out for 12 hours, as he will then have ample time to eat his fill. He should have as much exercise as can be managed, as this increases the blood circulation and will help to keep his feet healthy.

If, in spite of your care, the pony shows signs of foundering by appearing sore in his feet, be very strict about his diet, exercise him on a lead on soft ground and stand him in water or a wet muddy patch for an hour morning and night. Consult your Vet and carry out whatever treatment he prescribes. Next year, start earlier with your preventive measures and be even stricter. Once a pony is foundered, even a little he is very subject to its recurrence and once his feet have been affected in this way, they can never be quite back to al. The more severe the attack the more harmful and lasting the results.

Another cause of founder is a big feed of oats or any rich food. If it is known that a horse has got to feed like this, shut him up and do not left him drink. Get the Vet's advice for treatment.

To develop laminitis is a very sad thing to happen to a horse, but it need not happen if only the owner thinks and acts soon enough and firmly enough. It is much kinder to have a hungry horse than one that is foundered

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