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Diseases and Laminitis

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Laminitis is associated with an almost unbelievable number of disease conditions, from intestinal disorders to problems with the lungs, from reproductive disorders to orthopedic conditions. When there is an underlying disease process, the foot is just an innocent bystander that gets caught up in the problem. However, if laminitis develops in a horse that's otherwise seriously ill, the laminitis can get really bad and may be very difficult to treat. Even if the horse gets over its primary problem, the secondary laminitis can be devastating, even fatal. If you could just figure out a way to keep your horse from ever getting seriously ill, you'd have one potential cause eliminated! However, what you can do is keep your veterinarian involved in your horse's health care. Make sure that your horse is seen at least once a year for a routine check-up. This is especially important in older horses, those in which equine Cushing's disease may develop. If your horse does develop signs of disease, consult with him or her as soon as possible. In particular, call your veterinarian if your horse fits any of the following circumstances:

1. It has gotten into the feed bin and eaten several pounds of grain
2. It is showing signs of abdominal distress (colic) such as pain, rolling, pawing, biting at the flanks, etc.
3. It seems reluctant to move or has any of the signs of acute laminitis
4. Your mare has not passed her afterbirth within three hours after foaling
5. Your horse has the long, curly haircoat typical of Equine Cushing's Disease

By making sure that your horse is healthy and by treating problems as soon as they come up, you'll go a long way towards preventing more serious problems, such as laminitis.