

Have you seen our clinical fact sheets?

You may have noticed a recent addition to our practice website! We have uploaded a large number of fact sheets aiming to give clients an informative overview of a number of commonly seen and encountered conditions. From asthma to choke, laminitis to mud fever, our fact sheets cover the lot!

Have a read next time you are on our website:

kingsbountyequine.co.uk/kings-bounty-clinical-fact-sheets/



Spring worming

At this time of the year we recommend performing a worm egg count to check your horse's roundworm burden. Worm egg count testing is a vital aspect of targeted worming programmes and key to helping combat anthelmintic resistance.

Manure samples can be dropped off to the practice Monday-Thursday 9-5pm or given to your vet when they are at your yard. Please give the practice a call to let us know if you are dropping in a manure sample. All we require is 3-4 nuggets of fresh manure in a sealed bag or container, labelled with your details and horse's name, as well as the last time they were wormed and which wormer was used.



Looking to breed your mare?

Did you know that Kings Bounty Equine Practice is on the BEVA Approved AI List for insemination with fresh and chilled semen.

Liz has considerable experience with all aspects of breeding work and is happy to talk with clients on a case by case basis if you are thinking of breeding your mare.



When to castrate your colt

Castration is probably the most commonly performed routine surgical procedure in horses and either takes place under standing sedation and local anaesthetic, or under general anaesthetic. Age, size and temperament of the colt will determine which method is used.

Colts can be castrated at any age, however as a practice we recommend between 6-18 months. Generally speaking, younger colts tend to recover quicker and have fewer post operative complications.

Most colts are castrated in the spring or autumn to avoid the summer heat and flies and winter mud in order to reduce the risk of infection post surgery.

If you would like further information about castrating your colt please contact the office to speak to one of our vets.



Lumps and bumps

Lumps and bumps are a common cause for concern from horse owners and vets alike. Two of the most commonly seen lumps on horses are sarcoids and melanomas.

Sarcoids

Sarcoids are the most common skin tumour to occur in horses. They can develop in the skin, anywhere on the body, often in multiple sites. There is a genetic predisposition to sarcoid formation, a link to bovine papillomavirus which causes warts in cattle and flies are believed to be capable of transmitting the virus. Sarcoids will often appear on thinly haired areas of the body for example around the eyes, flanks, abdomen and groin.

Many sarcoids appear small and inconspicuous to begin with, however can deteriorate rapidly, become ulcerated or infected and painful for the horse. For this reason, aggressive treatment is often recommended sooner rather than later.

Treatment is varied depending on the type and location of the sarcoid, but may involve:

- Laser or surgical removal
- Topical or injectable cytotoxic agents
- BCG injections
- Banding



Melanomas:

Melanomas are most commonly associated with grey horses. The tumours develop when cells containing pigment (melanin) multiply and become cancerous. Melanomas often grow in the skin, however it is possible for them to grow undetected, internally too (for example in the abdomen or chest).

Initially melanomas are slow growing and benign in nature however with time they can become malignant, locally aggressive and migrate to other sites. It is estimated that about 80% of grey horses over the age of 15 years will have a melanoma.

The most common sites for melanomas to form are under the tail, around the sheath, on the neck and around the face. Melanomas often appear as black, shiny nodules or can be felt as nodules underneath the skin.

Again, prompt treatment is often recommended for melanomas and will often include surgical or laser excision, chemotherapy or therapeutic vaccination.



Our vets advise arranging a visit for a dermatological assessment if you notice a new lump on your horse, or if you notice that a historic lump has grown or suddenly changed appearance. If appropriate, our vets will biopsy lumps for laboratory assessment to determine the cause and best treatment options.



SPRING EQUINE EMERGENCIES

Spring is in the air; the flowers are blooming and the trees and paddocks are turning a lovely shade of green. Sadly, it can also mean hidden dangers for your horse.

Laminitis

Spring grass is high in sugars called fructans and can induce laminitis if eaten in large amounts.

Laminitis is a painful and potentially devastating disease that causes pathological changes in the laminae of the feet and, in severe cases, may result in long lasting, crippling changes.

Warning signs to look out for:

- Weight shifting
- Reluctance to move
- Rocking back onto the heels
- An increase in hoof wall temperature

Minimising the risk of laminitis:

- Watch your horse does not become overweight
- You should carefully monitor your horse's diet
- Restrict your horse's grass intake where necessary by strip grazing using electric tape or using a muzzle

Monitor your horse daily for signs of laminitis.

Prevention is always better than cure – if in any doubt, always call your vet.

Colic

Spring brings an increase in lush grass and so it is vital that you manage your horse's intake.

Horses are usually fed hay and hard feed over the winter to keep weight on and so most horses come out of the winter looking rather well. They will not be used to the rich green grass and so it is important you gradually introduce them to the Spring grass slowly. Failure to do this may cause an upset of the horse's intestinal bacteria, which could lead to colic.

Warning signs to look out for:

(Signs can vary from mild to severe, and things can often change very quickly)

- Flank watching
- Pawing
- Rolling
- Lip curling
- Quiet/dull

It is important to know what is normal for your horse, so that you can be aware of any changes which may be an early sign of colic.

Minimising the risk of colic:

- Make changes to routine slowly over several weeks
- For horses going onto summer grazing, increase the time spent on new grass slowly, starting with an hour per day
- For horses that are likely to gorge themselves on long grass, consider using a grazing muzzle
- Keep your horse up to date with targeted worming and dental treatment
- Ensure that your horse drinks plenty of water

SPRING EQUINE EMERGENCIES

Equine Grass Sickness

Equine grass sickness (EGS) can occur at any time of the year but is most often seen between April to July.

The disease affects mainly grazing horses and currently the cause remains unclear. The disease mainly acts by disrupting the nerves that supply the gastrointestinal tract, hence affecting gut motility. However, other parts of the general nervous system are also affected.

Warning signs to look out for:

- Colic (mild or severe)
- Dull demeanour
- Muscle tremors
- Sweating
- Difficulty eating
- Excess salivation
- Eyelids appear droopy
- Increased heart rate
- Firm faecal balls with mucous coating



Minimising the risk of EGS:

- Try and limit exposure to pastures during high risk periods where previous cases have occurred
- Reduce the amount of soil disturbance from methods such as harrowing or mechanical faeces removal
- Encourage removal of faeces by hand
- In heavily grazed or sparse pastures offer supplementary forage
- Avoid sudden changes in diet
- Limit use of ivermectin based wormers
- Minimise the number of horses co-grazing, especially youngsters

Atypical Myopathy

Atypical myopathy, caused by horses eating sycamore seeds, often occurs during the spring and autumn months and is a highly fatal muscle disease in horses.

It is caused by a toxin found in sycamore trees (*Acer Pseudoplatanus*) and is a distressing disease that results in degradation of respiratory, cardiac (heart) and postural muscles.

At this time of year, sycamore seedlings are starting to appear and it is vital your horses do not ingest them. Horses suffering from atypical myopathy have high levels of a toxin called Hypoglycin A that prevents energy being produced within their muscle cells.

Warning signs to look out for:

- Weakness
- Muscle trembling
- Signs of colic
- Exercise intolerance



Minimising the risk of atypical myopathy:

To minimise your horse's risk of atypical myopathy, reduce exposure to sycamore seeds and seedlings by removing them from the ground. If this is not possible, then removing the horse from the area is crucial.