

MAY 2008

MID-HUDSON VETERINARY PRACTICE, P.C.


(845) 225-3100

FOCUS on CUSHING'S SYNDROME



Mark Jordan, DVM
Matthew Elliott, DVM
Jennifer Enger, DVM
Michelle Singer, DVM

Congratulations!

 Dr. Jennifer Enger and her husband are expecting a baby in July! Dr. Enger will be leaving us in June to get ready for their new arrival. And YES she WILL be back later this year.



"A baby will make love stronger, days shorter, nights longer, bankroll smaller, home happier, clothes shabbier, the past forgotten, and the future worth living for"
~unknown

Are you ready for show season?

- Do you have current copies of your Coggins and rabies certificates in the trailer / glove box?
- Do you have a fully stocked emergency kit ready to go if needed?

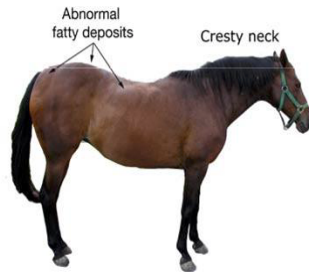
NO?

Call today to set up for Coggins testing or to order an MHVP emergency kit

Cushing's syndrome is a metabolic disease caused by a small tumor in the pituitary gland at the base of the brain. These tumors affect hormone production and secretion, and subsequently lead to a cascade of serious symptoms.

What are some common symptoms?

- Chronic laminitis
- Long, curly hair coat that fails to shed out seasonally
- Obesity with a thick "cresty" neck
- Chronic infections including tooth and foot infections
- Odd fat deposits on the rump



near the tail-head, on the sides of the back, and / or above the eyes

- PU/PD (excessive drinking and urinating)
- Lethargy and / or exercise intolerance

- Chronic weight loss / muscle wasting

Which horses are more prone to this disease?

Historically, these signs are age related, and typically appear in older horses. Cases have been documented in horses as young as 8 years old.

My horse is young but has some of these signs. Could he have Cushing's?

In younger, overweight horses, there is a similar condition called metabolic syndrome, or peripheral Cushing's. In these cases, fat cells, especially around the trunk, produce excesses of the same hormone we see in true Cushing's. Dietary modification and increased exercise are the key to managing these cases.

Is there a reliable test for the presence of Cushing's Disease?

Yes. The gold standard test is the Dexamethasone suppression test. In some cases, this test is contraindicated, and ACTH / Insulin level tests are the less risky choice.

How is Cushing's disease usually treated?

Through nutrition, medication and proper husbandry, there are several steps that owners can take to control the symptoms of Cushing's.

DIETARY

- Minimize carbohydrate intake- have inexpensive testing done on your hay. The carbohydrate content should be no greater than 10%.
- If feeding grain use low sugar, low starch, high fiber feeds. Special diets focusing on these requirements are now readily available.
- Eliminate treats.

MEDICAL

- Pergolide mesylate is the first choice in Cushing's treatment. Clinical improvement is usually seen within a few weeks.
- Cyproheptadine can often be a satisfactory second choice when budget is an issue.
- Chasteberry, available at health food stores, or the commercially available product Evitex can be added to either of the above medications.
- Isoxsuprine, Bute and or Banamine may also be indicated.
- Obese horses may benefit from thyroid supplementation to aid in weight loss.

HUSBANDRY

- Frequent hoof trimmings to manage uneven and rapid hoof growth



- Closely monitor for signs of infection
- Body clipping, in the spring, can make the Cushing's patient more comfortable.

With proper treatment

HAVE YOU COMMITTED A "RAK"?

"RAK" **R**andom **A**cts of **K**indness.

Are you cheerfully guilty of committing random acts of kindness?

One of our New Year resolutions, here at MHVP, is to participate in, promote and pay more attention to these acts. We have seen many of our clients give of themselves and

be openly kind to others.

SO; pass a kindness on... open a door, say "Hello", be tolerant, listen with your heart, lend a hand, share a smile, forgive mistakes, encourage a child and check our newsletters for RAK sightings.

*"How beautiful a day can be
Thank you, Jan Nagi,
for your participation
in RAK*