

Can a horse be allergic to Spring?

As spring approaches, many riders are looking forward to increased ride times, and thoughts of trail rides or the show season brings a smile to many faces. But for many others, the thought of spring brings with it anxiety. Anxiety that arises from the concerns they have about laminitis and founder. With April showers comes lush pasture and the fear of founder.

Our research has helped us to better understand the rising incidence of spring time laminitis.

It is my belief that many horses suffer the stresses of winter, and that the effects are not seen until early spring.

Allow me to explain. The symptoms associated with laminitis and founder is linked to Elastosis. Elastosis is simply a loss of elasticity within the connective tissues of the horse. When talking about the foot of the horse, we label it [Equine Digital Elastosis](#) or EDE. It may sound like I am beating the proverbial dead steed, with my constant touting of the need for proper hydration, but our research is based on fact not myth. Elastosis is just one symptom of toxicity resulting from mild chronic dehydration.

Let's take a look at some facts. The average horse requires a minimum of 7 to 9 gallons of water a day to remain healthy in the ideal environment. Many horses have spent the last few months stressed by low temperatures, shorter days, and less exercise. And even though many may have been considered good drinkers, the question that needs to be asked is; did they increase their water intake to cope with the stresses of winter? Most horse people know that in the winter you up the amount of hay given to aid the horse in maintaining body heat. With this increase in hay, an increase in water is also required. If we are being honest to our selves and our horses, we know that most horse drink less in the winter.

So what does this all mean? My horse is beginning to drink more now that the weather is getting warmer, and I am riding more, so what's the big deal?

The big deal is that mild chronic dehydration can result in high levels of sodium in the blood.

Let me explain what can occur with simple water restriction or a reduction of water intake of sufficient duration, lets say a reduction of several gallons a day over several months.

Many horses are feed processed feeds, and supplements in addition to hay throughout the winter, and can be subjected to over-consumption of sodium chlorides. Sodium chlorides or salts are common in most feed rations and supplements. Mild dehydration with over-consumption of sodium chloride can lead to salt toxicosis, a potentially serious condition. With a simple reduction in water of sufficient duration, the brain of the horse adapts to the body's state of hypernatremia (high sodium levels in the blood) and hyperosmolarity. Adaptive responses of the brain include the production of osmotic osmolytes

(osmolytes play a role in maintaining cell volume and fluid balance within cells) that counteract the osmotic imbalance; a new osmotic equilibrium is established.

Mild chronic dehydration can result in a mild form of this condition. Signs of toxicity and osmotic imbalances are seen when rapid re-hydration occurs. Spring can bring with it sufficient re -hydration and signs of toxicity. Some of these signs are mild elastosis; break down of horn integrity, hoof and skin infections, irregular fat deposits, and joint pain.

How can you aid your horse in transitioning to spring, if in fact your horse may have a mild form of toxicity associated with reduced water intake over the winter months?

Begin by slowly increasing your horses water intake. Wait one minute, how on earth can we do that? We all know that you can lead a horse to water, but... Well there are products to help encourage your horse to drink, and no, they are not electrolytes (salts). Our [Hydropathics HD](#)

was developed to encourage drinking, aiding the horse in correcting osmotic imbalances, and by effectively utilizing the appropriate homeopathic remedies, aid in detoxification. HD stands for Hydrate and Detoxify, and it does both very well.

Now is the time to detoxify and rehydrate your horse. It is less likely that our horses will have problems transitioning to spring if blood sodium levels are balanced, and toxins are eliminated.