

Kirkby Lonsdale • Kendal



Kendal Surgery

Monday to Friday
8.30am – 7.00pm

Saturday
8.30am – 12 noon.

Tel. 01539 722692

Kirkby Lonsdale Surgery

Monday & Tuesday
8.30am – 6.00pm

Wednesday & Friday
8.30am – 5.00pm

Thursday
8.30am – 7.00pm

Saturday
8.30am – 12 noon

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Tying-up.

Now that summer is rapidly approaching we are probably all chomping at the bit to get our horses into shape and ready to get out on all those rides in the gorgeous sunshine. In our eagerness we may skip a couple of steps in the conditioning process for our horses or perhaps speed up the process.

We must be careful not to work them longer or harder too soon. Doing so can lead to a condition called 'tying-up'. This condition is basically like your horse having an all-over-the-body muscle cramp caused by toxins that build up in muscle during exercise.

Exercise is the predisposing factor with muscle degeneration being caused by high levels of lactic acid and low oxygen in muscle tissue. Other risk factors involve a high carbohydrate diet during training down-times, electrolyte balance, vitamins and stress levels.

Often the condition is only mild but the condition can lead to severe kidney problems or death.

Common signs:

- Will occur after work
- Signs of discomfort including increased pulse and breathing rate
- Short strides/ muscle stiffness particularly in the hind quarters
- Tight, cramping muscle across croup and hindquarters
- Abnormally dark coloured urine, straining during the passing of urine.

What you should do:

- Call the vet. Signs of tying-up can easily be mistaken for signs of laminitis or colic.
- Rug up to prevent chill as this exacerbates the cramping
- Encourage horses to drink as this will help flush out the kidneys to remove the toxins built up in the muscles.

What you should **not** do:

- Do not move the horse as this may cause further muscle damage
- Do not allow your horse to lie down

- Do not give any pain relief or other medications until you have discussed so with your vet.

Prevention:

- Feed low carbohydrate, high fat diet
- Adjust the amount of grain/concentrate feed you give in relation to the amount of work they are doing
- Do not allow your horse to become dehydrated
- Remember the importance of warm-up and cool down before and after exercise
- Do not over-exercise your horse.



Fig 1. A horse that is tying-up will look very lame on the affected and reluctant to move. They will resent you touching the cramping muscles.

Continue to look out for laminitis

With the finer weather you will most certainly want to be turning your horses out for longer. Just remember to be careful of how much grazing they are getting. Restrict the intake of lush grass and keep an eye out for early signs of laminitis. Monitor for increased digital pulses, reluctance to move, heat on the hooves.

Any questions?

Please do not hesitate to contact us at either surgery if you have any queries regarding the topics covered in this or any of the newsletters.