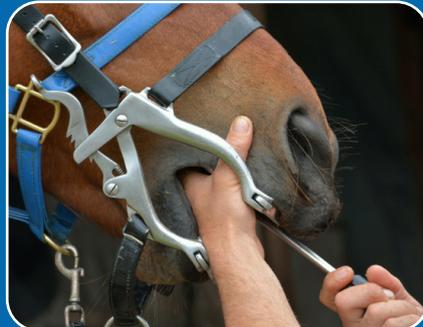


### PREPARATION FOR THE YEAR AHEAD!

Spring is rapidly approaching and riders are starting to get out and about with greater regularity and ease. As the start of new competition seasons are upon us it is time to run down that check list to ensure you are as prepared as you can be:

- Vaccinations complying with the rules (within 6 months under FEI competition rules; note the change to BHA rules regarding intervals for vaccinations):  
[inside.fei.org/fei/your-role/veterinarians/biosecurity-movements/vaccinations](https://inside.fei.org/fei/your-role/veterinarians/biosecurity-movements/vaccinations)
- Routine/restorative dentistry
- Farriery and foot balance assessments/radiography - 'No foot, No horse'
- Gait assessment- now is the time to identify if your horse may need additional help for the season ahead- whether it is routine soft tissue work or more targeted treatment for orthopaedic conditions.
- Saddle fitting
- Faecal worm egg counts



If you would like advice or to discuss any of these, please do get in touch!

#### Stable Close Equine Practice

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#### ECO POLICY

We are striving to make our practice more eco-friendly. We are now using Terracycle to allow us to recycle soft plastics and PPE alongside our recycling of the enormous amount of plastic/paper/card packaging we consume. We are also in the process of moving across to recyclable dispensing packaging and are working on the development of a compatible online invoicing/reminder system.

Although the miles we cover do not currently lend themselves to the use of electric vehicles we are constantly striving to group our visits geographically to reduce our carbon footprint- your help and flexibility where possible when booking appointments is greatly appreciated to improve this.

## AZOTURIA (aka tying up or exertional rhabdomyolysis)

It's a phrase used to describe a horse with signs of muscle damage, of which there are many causes. Typically you will notice your horse sweating, with stiff muscles, especially the hindquarters, and reluctance to move occasionally accompanied by dark red brown coloured urine.

Acute, one-off tying up is usually caused by a sudden increase in exercise level in comparison to what your horse might be used to, electrolyte depletion or dietary imbalances; for example a horse coming off box rest and then going out for a long hard hack, or eventing your horse on a really hot day.



Chronic repeated episodes of tying up or even poor performance may have a genetic element. Thoroughbreds, amongst other breeds, are prone to a form of tying up caused by abnormalities in the way calcium is regulated in the skeletal muscle, and this can be triggered by various factors such as stress, lameness and a high grain diet.

Polysaccharide storage myopathy (PSSM) is another genetic condition where abnormal sugars are stored in skeletal muscle which can be responsible for your horse tying up.

### Diagnosing azoturia

Diagnosis of azoturia is by careful clinical examination, some cases can mimic other conditions such as colic or pelvic fracture so veterinary attention is important. Blood samples are usually taken to measure the levels of two muscle enzymes, creatinine kinase (CK) and aspartate aminotransferase (AST) which are released when muscles are damaged. The blood tests allow us to confirm the condition, to assess the severity of the attack and to compare to future samples when monitoring recovery.

In the case of PSSM - there are two distinct types: Type 1 PSSM can be diagnosed with a genetic test on a hair sample and is a mutation commonly found in quarter horses and draft breeds; whereas PSSM-2 requires a muscle biopsy to make a diagnosis.

### Treating azoturia

The vet is likely to administer an intravenous painkiller and possibly a muscle relaxant • Severely affected horses will require intravenous fluids to reduce the risk of kidney damage Box rest is needed initially while the muscles recover, followed by gentle exercise either in hand or turned out in a paddock depending on the individual case • Blood tests can be repeated prior to commencing exercise to confirm that muscle enzyme levels have returned to normal preventing azoturia.

### The best way to prevent horses from azoturia is through careful management:

- Avoid days off or prolonged box rest in susceptible horses
- Reducing hard feed when in light work
- Feeding a high fat/low starch diet
- There is some evidence that low vitamin E or selenium levels may be implicated in a few cases and supplementation can be given (contact your vet for further information)

**Remember azoturia is classed as an emergency! If you suspect your horse has azoturia, your vet should be called straight away.**

## SPRING WARNING! ATYPICAL MYOPATHY

Atypical myopathy, also referred to as Seasonal Pasture Myopathy (SPM), often occurs during the spring and autumn months and is a highly fatal muscle disease in horses. It is a disease associated with horses eating sycamore seeds or seedlings which have been found, in varying concentrations, to contain a substance called Hypoglycin-A (HGA). AM is a distressing disease that results in deterioration of respiratory, cardiac (heart) and postural muscles. Affected horses show signs of weakness, muscle trembling and pain. Sometimes they will show signs of colic and exercise intolerance, among a variety of other clinical signs.

The onset of the disease is rapid and horses can quickly deteriorate within 6-12 hours. AM can affect individual horses or several horses within the same group suggesting that some horses may be more susceptible to the disease than others. Research is currently on-going into the reasons why some horses seem not to be affected by HGA and others develop life threatening AM. Fatality rates may be as high as 50-85%.

HGA levels can differ between individual sycamore trees possibly due to the time of year or due to different climatic conditions - we are unsure to the reason why and research is on-going.



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, removing the horse from the area is crucial. It is imperative to seek urgent veterinary attention if you have concerns that your horse may be exhibiting any of these symptoms.

## MICROCHIPPING - your questions answered!

### Do all horses need to be microchipped?

In the United Kingdom, it is now mandatory for all horses, ponies and donkeys to be microchipped. This is important because lost or stolen horses can be reunited with their owners more easily, but it also improves animal welfare because the police and animal welfare organisations can trace the owners of dumped horses.

The microchip must be implanted by a vet and the owner/keeper has a legal obligation to keep up to date via the database.

### Can you get fined if your horse is not microchipped?

Owners who fail to microchip their horses, ponies and donkeys could face sanctions from their local authority including a compliance notice and a fine of up to £200.

If your horse, pony or donkey is not yet microchipped, we strongly advise you get this done as soon as possible.

### When do you need to microchip a foal?

Legally, foals must be microchipped within six months of birth or before 31 December of the year in which they were born. Often this is done through the society for the particular breed.

### What should I do if I am unsure if my horse is microchipped?

As your vet to scan your horse to check for you

### What is a microchip?

A microchip is a small electronic device, about the size of a grain of rice. Each microchip has a unique number within it that can be scanned, and recorded in a central database, along with an owner's personal contact details.

The microchip is placed underneath the skin using a specially designed implanter. An anaesthetic is not required, and the procedure should be no more painful than a routine vaccination.

### How do you update your details?

You will need to update your details each time you move house or your phone number or email address change. To do this, visit: [equineregister.co.uk](http://equineregister.co.uk).

### What is the Central Equine Database?

The Central Equine Database (CED) is an online database which holds records of all equines in the UK. You can visit [equineregister.co.uk](http://equineregister.co.uk) to set up an account and make use of its services: [equineregister.co.uk](http://equineregister.co.uk).

## EQUINE PASSPORTS - all you need to know!

### Do all horses need a passport?

On 1st July 2009, it became a requirement for all horses, ponies and donkeys in the UK to have a passport, even if they are retired or do not ever leave the yard? You can be fined up to £5,000 for not having a valid passport! The legislation comes from an EU directive that has been adopted into UK law to protect the human food chain from meat containing traces of equine medicine that may be harmful to humans. It has had the additional benefit of making it harder to sell stolen horses.

### Is there a deadline to apply for a new passport?

Yes - under the legislation, foals must have a passport and microchip within six months of birth or before 30th November of the year in which they were born, whichever date occurs later. If your horse does not have a passport your insurance may be invalid; you may also be liable to prosecution if you attempt to sell the horse.

### When do I need to show my equine's passport?

The passport must be always kept with the horse (except in special circumstances such as a short hack/ride). For example, if you normally stable your horse at livery, the passport must be kept at the livery yard. You might be asked to present your horse's passport at a competition, when transporting your horse or when your horse receives veterinary treatment. If you have a horse in your care and you can't show a valid passport on request, you could get an unlimited fine.

### What do I do with the passport if my horse has passed away?

In the event of the horse's death, you will need to send the passport back to the office that issued it. It is an offence not to do this within 30 days.

### Section IX/II of the horse passport

Section IX of the Horse Passport MUST be signed by the owner, keeper or veterinarian to identify whether the horse is 'intended' or 'not intended' to enter the human food chain. This is primarily to ensure that no horses receiving certain medications enter the food chain, and also to prevent the sale of stolen horses or ponies as the passport should prove its identity.

### FEI passports

An FEI passport is mandatory for horses competing at most international FEI sanctioned events. If you are planning on competing at an FEI event and your horse requires an FEI passport, please contact your discipline directly for information on how to apply. Be aware that most disciplines require at least 6 weeks' notice in advance before they can issue a passport.



## SPOT LIGHT ON REBECCA FELLOWES

Many of our clients will have met Rebecca now, who joined our team in April last year.

Rebecca is one of our first opinion ambulatory vets. She graduated from The University of Glasgow in 2016.

After graduating Rebecca flew to Australia where she worked for a year as an ambulatory equine vet. She then moved to world renowned Goulburn Valley Equine Hospital where she completed an internship focusing on performance horses and reproduction in racehorses.

From Goulburn Valley, Rebecca moved to Liphook Equine Hospital where she completed an 18 month hospital based position before joining the LEH ambulatory team.

In her free time, Rebecca trains and races at iron distance triathlon and has previously represented GB on the age group team at the Long Course World Championships.

### What do you enjoy most about equine practice?

I really enjoy the diversity of general equine practice. You get in your car each morning not knowing what challenges you may face that day.

### Do you have a specific interest within equine practice?

I love looking at everything holistically- working synergistically with the whole support network of the rider and horse (farrier, dentist, nutritionist, physiotherapist etc) to pre-empt and prevent injuries and have them both working at their optimal performance.

### What is your greatest clinical aspiration?

To always provide the best veterinary care for our equine patients and their owners and finish each day thinking I made a difference to someone's life - equine or human!

### What's the best piece of advice you have ever been given?

Look at the horse as well as the lab results!

### What is the most interesting case you have been involved with?

At a hospital I worked in previously, we had a young racehorse in for wobbler surgery. The surgery is pioneering in itself however, she was also completely vet and needle phobic and as a result very difficult to handle. With the help of the nurses, I spent two weeks doing positive reinforcement training and clicker training with her so we could handle her sufficiently to anaesthetise her and perform the surgery. The surgery was a great success and she was discharged a lot easier to handle than when she came in! If you would like any help or advice on 'clicker training' please get in touch!

[youtube.com/watch?v=MRAIdnQmzak](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MRAIdnQmzak)

