

What Equine Metabolic Syndrome, or Insulin Resistance, Looks Like:



This is a case of severe, untreated insulin resistance. Notice the abnormal fat pads on the rump, behind the shoulder, over the loin and on the neck. This 'regional adiposity' can occur even when the ribs are showing.

You never want to let insulin resistance get this bad, because this is what was on the other side of the log:

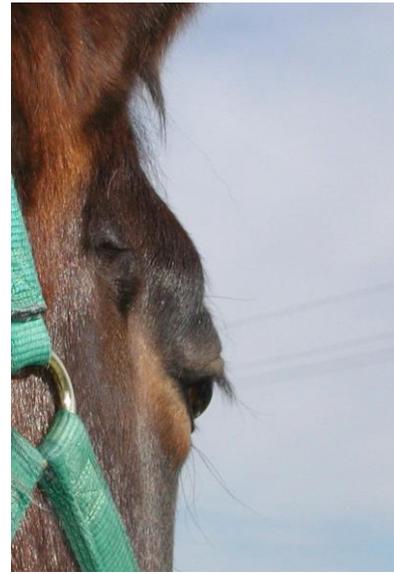
High levels of insulin can cause laminitis, founder and permanent crippling.



This severely insulin resistant pony exhibits dippled fat in the muscle of the hip, even though her overall body condition cannot be considered overweight, and she is fairly fit. This is not just about obesity. It's often about skinny horses with abnormal fat deposits.



Notice the fat pad behind the shoulder. This mare's ribs show slightly and she is well muscled and at a good body condition. Abnormal fat deposits are independent of overall body weight. Fat above the eye socket is another place for abnormal fat deposits.



The rings in this IR mare's feet coincide with a period of mild laminitis from an increase of sugar in the diet. It caused stretching of the lamina in absence of noticeable lameness. The smooth regions above and below the ringed mid-section grew when the horse was removed from pasture.

Stretched lamina with specks of blood are an indication that tests for insulin and glucose are needed. This gelding's feet showed these signs of laminitis a month *before* he showed any lameness.



The classic 'cresty neck' often has a dip in front of the withers, which distinguishes it from a normal cresty neck found in baroque breeds.



Of course we all recognize the abnormally obese animal as being metabolically challenged. Notice with fat deposits in the sheath. Mares may have fat deposits in front of the udder. Surprisingly, this young Shetland had not foundered yet, and responded well to a change of diet and exercise initiated by his new, pro-active owner.