

Navicular Syndrome in horses

NAVICULAR SYNDROME (ALSO REFERRED TO AS PALMAR HEEL PAIN)



WHAT IS NAVICULAR SYNDROME?

Navicular Syndrome is associated with chronic forelimb lameness that is usually present in both front feet but is often worse in one foot. It is generally a disease of horses rather than ponies, with affected animals typically 4-15 years old. Classic Navicular disease is now known as Navicular bone disease. Navicular Syndrome incorporates Navicular bone disease and also degeneration or damage to the other structures within the foot.

CAUSES

The exact cause of Navicular Syndrome is unknown but there are several factors which can play a part in its development:

- ▲ Foot imbalance
- ▲ Excessive loading
- ▲ Vascular constriction
- ▲ Low heels and long toes



CLINICAL SIGNS

- ▲ Short stride
- ▲ Stumbling
- ▲ Increase in lameness after work
- ▲ Pointing the toe of the most affected limb
- ▲ Pain over the middle third of the frog when testing with hoof testers

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FURTHER INVESTIGATION

Regional anaesthesia – palmar digital nerve block.

Radiography – a full set of foot radiographs. Sometimes Navicular Syndrome is not evident on radiographs and other forms of imaging may be needed.

MRI – this is sometimes needed to ascertain if any soft tissue structures around the Navicular bone are also involved.



TREATMENT

Rest and controlled exercise

Specific Bisphosphonate – to help manage any bone resorptive processes that are occurring within the Navicular bone

Non-steroidal anti-inflammatories

Remedial shoeing – this is particularly important to aid the support of the Navicular bone and the structures around it

Intra-articular injections

Shockwave therapy

Surgical intervention



PROGNOSIS

Navicular Syndrome is a degenerative condition which currently has no definitive cure. However, good management and treatment can extend the working life of the horse.

This information has been provided by Dechra Veterinary Products, the makers of Osphos.