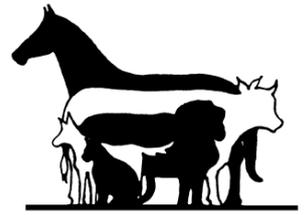


Main Ridge Veterinary Clinic



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Weight loss

My horse is losing weight!

Weight loss in the horse or pony can be a serious problem. It is more commonly an issue seen in older animals, however can be seen at any age.

Causes

The causes of weight loss in the horse and pony can vary dramatically, from very simple, obvious things such as inadequate dietary intake, all the way up to complex hormonal and metabolic issues.

Common causes include, but are not limited to:

- Natural seasonal changes
- Stress/travel/habitual conditions
- Dietary intake
- Dental issues
- Parasites (e.g. gastro-intestinal worms)
- PPID (“Cushing’s”)
- Other hormonal changes
- Diarrhoea
- Infection
- Underlying systemic conditions (such as liver/kidney disease)
- Other (lymphoma, etc)

Diagnosis

The diagnosis of the factors causing weight loss in your animal can be very simple, or very complex. Ensuring you can provide a thorough history and specifics of diet and worming is very important. Basic diagnostic tests or examinations will also likely include a dental examination and blood tests. However, the cause is often multifactorial or complicated. For instance, the factors behind diarrhoea alone can be complex and take considerable time and testing to diagnose.

Treatments

Treatment(s) will vary with relative cause(s). Many causes of weight loss can often be easily managed or treated (i.e. pergolide treatment for PPID, corrective dental work, increasing dietary caloric intake). More complex causes require more complex treatments.

If at any time you are worried about your horse/pony's condition, or if you have any further questions, please contact the Main Ridge Veterinary Clinic on (03) 5989 6232.