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## **What can I do to reduce the risk of laminitis during spring's lush grass growth?**

The rapid intake of sugars and starches, which are stored in high quantities in lush spring grasses, is one way to predispose horses to [laminitis](#) and possibly founder. Pasture/grazing management is essential to helping prevent laminitis, especially for horses predisposed to laminitis (ponies and overweight horses).

One good grazing practice is to limit grazing during the times of day when sugars are at their highest levels in grasses. Horses predisposed to laminitis should typically graze in the evening and/or overnight.

A second good practice is to limit grazing during periods of environmental stress on grasses (drought, significant temperature changes, much colder temperatures, etc.)

Another good idea is rotational grazing. Let your pastures get to a height of 6"-8" before letting the horses graze. Once your pastures get down to 3"-4" rotate pastures and allow the initial grazing pasture to regrow. Allowing your grass to reach a length of 6"-8" before letting your horses graze reduces the likelihood of them feeding on the lower portion of the stalk, where there are often higher amounts of sugar. Also, avoid grazing on pastures with a prevalence of seed heads, which also contain high amounts of sugar.

One last practice is to introduce your horses to the pasture over time. Let them out for 15 minutes and gradually increase by 15 minute intervals until you reach 4-5 hours. After this period is reached, you can let them graze without restrictions. Also, feed them their normal hay before turning them out the first few times.

If you have any questions or concerns, please [contact us](#). We are happy to answer your questions.

**Answered By: [Lindsey Boone, DVM, PhD](#)**