

Feeding the Horse with Liver Disease

Horses and ponies with liver disease require specialist feeding whilst avoiding other problems such as laminitis and colic.

DOs:

- Do provide a low fat diet (<5%)
- Do provide a low protein diet (<12%)
- Provide good quality hay to form the vast majority of the diet
- Consider providing vitamin B supplementation
- Feed little and often to ensure the liver is not overloaded
- If necessary, use 'tempters' to encourage inappetent animals. For example, apples/carrots/, apple sauce, apple juice, peppermint cordial, dried mint leaf, fenugreek and small amounts of molasses

DON'Ts:

- Don't feed high protein haylage
- Avoid high protein alfalfa chops
- Don't feed 'Senior' or 'Conditioning' mixes even if the horse is underweight as these diets are too high in proteins, fats, starch and sugars.
- Avoid the horse becoming overweight or gradually reduce weight if this is already a problem
- Avoid all cereal-based feeds.
- Avoid excessive feeding of treats and feed 'safe' treats such as apples, carrots and high fibre nuts

Possible Diets

Good quality forage available at all times; composed of variable ratios of hay and straw depending on body condition and time of year.

Happy Hoof and Spillers High Fibre Cubes work very well together and SpeediBeet is fine for animals with liver disease unlike traditional molassed beet products which are too high in sugar.