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Triple R Equine Welfare

# Seedy Toe

Information Sheet No. 5

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The vertical crack has already started to climb the hoof wall.



Notice the black line at the front of the toe.



This foot was infected all the way around the hoof capsule and had to be cut away and treated.

This horse has made a full recovery.

## What is Seedy Toe?

Seedy toe (also known as White Line Disease) is an attack of anaerobic pathogens and fungi. It enters the foot through a break in the laminae resulting in a cavity that fills with dirt.

## How to recognise Seedy Toe

The first sign of seedy toe is usually a dark spot on the laminae. Your farrier should notice it after rasping the hoof around the area. The second sign would be a vertical crack on the hoof capsule.

## What causes Seedy toe?

Seedy toe can be caused by Laminitis, long toes where pressure on the toe causes the laminae to break down and bacteria enters, incorrect diet which can cause a weak laminae connection (subclinical laminitis), hot shoeing which burns and weakens the laminae, and the grazing stance of a horse where one foreleg is tucked under the horse and the other is in front of the horse.

## The effects of Seedy toe

The short term effects are that if it is left untreated, the crack can travel up the hoof wall where it meets the coronet band. This can cause a permanent defect in the hoof capsule. The long term effects are that the pedal bone can become infected and erode due to the bacteria, the integral strength of the hoof capsule can be lost and a permanent weakness of the laminae can occur.

## Prevention and treatment

Prevent seedy toe by regular trimming, providing a dry clean environment ie free draining paddocks, (paying particular attention where septic tank overflow pipes drain into paddocks) and a balanced diet which will aid in preventing subclinical laminitis. There are numerous chemicals and formulas people have used in the past to treat seedy toe. It is my opinion and many other farriers and vets, that resection is the best treatment. Exposure of the infection to the air is normally enough to kill the pathogen, coupled with good hygiene practises, daily washing with apple cider vinegar or a mild betadine mixture. In some cases where there is a deep hollow in the hoof capsule, a beeswax mixture can be applied. This prevents mud from impacting into the hoof capsule and also contains ingredients to help kill the bacteria.

In cases where seedy toe has travelled to the coronet band and has been resected to expose the infection, a brace is applied to support the hoof capsule while it heals.



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