

Pituitary Pars Intermedia Dysfunction (PPID)

Pituitary Pars Intermedia Dysfunction (PPID) is caused by a pituitary tumor at the base of the brain that causes overproduction of hormones. PPID is a very common disease in older horses- but not just an old horse disease! It has been diagnosed in horses as young as 5 years old and over 20% of horses over age 15 have PPID. The prevalence of this disease increases the older the horse gets. The goal is to diagnose it early and catch it before the typical long/non-shedding haircoat- this happens very late in the disease course.

Signs of PPID are listed below. Some horses may have just one, others have many on the list.

- Decreased athletic performance
- Subtle delayed hair coat shedding
- Patches of longer and lighter hair in summer especially back of legs, jugular groove
- Shedding later than herd mates
- In severe cases, a long, shaggy, non-shedding haircoat
- Loss of muscle mass (topline especially)
- Fat on top of neck, tail head, above eyes
- Decreased immune system
- Recurrent infections (hoof abscesses, tooth root infections)
- Periodontal disease
- Parasitism
- Abnormal sweating (increased or decreased)
- Increased drinking and urination
- Infertility
- Weight gain or weight loss
- Change in attitude/lethargy
- Tendon/ligament laxity or injury
- Bulging supraorbital fat above eyes
- Laminitis
- Seizure-like activity

Diagnosis

- Testing for PPID is a blood test that involves fasting from grain.
- Horses should have their bloodwork retested 1-3 months after starting Prascend treatment. Dosage instructions may be adjusted based on the results of this bloodwork.
- Once the PPID is controlled, your horse should have bloodwork retested every 6-12 months.
- Horses with controlled PPID on appropriate dosages of Prascend should experience resolution of their symptoms. If your horse is still experiencing symptoms of PPID while on Prascend, a bloodwork recheck is in order and the dosage may need to be increased.

Treatment

Prascend is the only approved and effective treatment for PPID. This pill is given daily in a treat, grain, or syringe. It is bitter, so be careful not to get any of the pill residue on the outside of the treat you are trying to hide it in. It also can help to feed a plain treat before and after to avoid suspicion. Below are some treat ideas:

- Piece of carrot
- Prunes
- Nickerdoodles
- Rice Krispy Treats
- Oatmeal Crème Pie Cookies
- #2 size Gelatin Capsules
- Dimples Horse Treats
- Orange Circus Peanuts
- Peanut Butter
- Fig Newtons/ Apple Newtons
- Standlee Pill Carriers
- Beet-E-Bites
- Marshmallows
- German horse muffins
- Black Licorice

The type of treat may need to be changed from time to time if your horse becomes tired of it. If your horse is insulin resistant in addition to having PPID, low sugar options should be used. If your horse will not eat the pill hidden in a treat or grain, the pill will dissolve in a few milliliters of water and can be syringed in the mouth.

Sometimes when horses first start Prascend treatment, they will temporarily have a decreased appetite for their grain. Usually, their appetite is normal for hay and grass so this issue is minimal unless this horse is under weight. This side effect is usually temporary and once we find an adjustment that works for the horse the issue usually resolves. If your horse is experiencing this side effect here are a few things you could try:

- Do not hide the pill in grain, so that they don't associate the taste of the pill with the taste of their grain.
- Separate the time of Prascend dosing from the time when you feed your horse its grain.
- Try giving Prascend at the very end of the day after all grain meals have been eaten.
- Gradually weaning up to the prescribed dosage over 1-2 weeks.
- The dose can be split 1/2 in AM and 1/2 in PM.
- If your horse is already on the full dosage, the dose can be decreased and then gradually increased again.

If your horse is having appetite issues while on Prascend, please call us and we can guide you through dosage adjustments!