

## My horse or pony has been diagnosed with PPID and my vet has prescribed PRASCEND®. So what's next?

Finding out that your horse has or may have a disease is always a worrying time. Rest assured though that a diagnosis of PPID disease does not mean that your horse's quality-of-life has to suffer.

PPID is very common and is thought to affect 20% of horses over the age of 15. PPID is a hormonal disease caused by changes in the pituitary gland, which is located at the base of the brain. This gland is normally controlled by a substance called dopamine and its role is to produce a variety of hormones which play an important role in maintaining and controlling a variety of bodily functions.

Horses and ponies with PPID don't produce enough dopamine which means that the pituitary gland becomes uncontrolled and produces too many hormones. One of these hormones is called ACTH, but it is likely that there are many others. Fortunately, PRASCEND replaces dopamine allowing hormone levels to return to normal.

## Why do I have to keep monitoring my PPID-affected horse or pony while on treatment?

This is a lifelong condition, and consistent treatment will be necessary. Additionally this is a progressive disease, so as the disease changes, the dose of PRASCEND may also need to be adjusted. So it is important not only to monitor your horse's condition and attitude, but also to routinely check ACTH levels.

It is important that horses continue to be monitored to help prevent clinical problems. Since many horses or ponies with PPID are diagnosed later in life they are already prone to developing other age related conditions and PPID increases their susceptibility to many of these conditions. It is therefore important that your horse or pony not only have consistent treatment for any illnesses but also have regular health checks by your vet to make sure they stay in the best health possible.

## When to check ACTH levels

**Each patient is individual but a typical schedule for retesting ACTH levels may include:**

- An initial check 4-6 weeks after starting PRASCEND. These results, in conjunction with how your horse or pony is acting, will help determine the effectiveness of treatment and whether the dose needs to be increased or decreased.
- Once your horse is stabilised testing should be done every 6 to 12 months, ideally with one test being in the autumn months of March or April. Although normal horses have slightly increased ACTH concentrations in the autumn, horses with PPID can have markedly elevated ACTH concentrations if the disease is not being adequately controlled by a sufficient dose of PRASCEND.
- If testing twice a year is prohibitive, a yearly test during the autumn is recommended.
- If at any time you think your horse or pony is not responding as well to treatment or is going backward, no matter how long they have been on treatment, it is important to contact your veterinarian and have your horse or pony reassessed. They might determine it is important to check their ACTH levels at this time. Common signs that the dose of PRASCEND may need to be increased include: failure to shed out the coat normally, increased urination and drinking, and weight loss. It is important you do not change your horse's dose of PRASCEND unless advised by your veterinarian.

## Good management practices

While daily treatment with PRASCEND and monitoring ACTH levels is essential to control the clinical signs of PPID, there are many additional management strategies that you can implement to ensure that your horse remains happy and healthy.

**These include:**

- a nutritionally well balanced diet,
- routine hoof care,
- regular dental checks,
- preventive health care such as vaccination and a regular worming schedule,
- proper coat and skin care,
- rapid treatment of infections such as foot abscesses, or nasal discharge that may indicate sinus infection or pneumonia, and
- a reduced stress environment.

If your horse or pony doesn't respond to treatment and good management, it is important to consider other issues that might be affecting your animal such as Equine Metabolic Syndrome (EMS). If you have any concerns or queries about your horse please speak to your veterinarian.