

Don't tip the scales!

If your horse or pony eats too much and doesn't get enough exercise, he could be in danger! Horses, just like humans, need balanced diets and exercise to stay fit and healthy. When horses and ponies are too fat, exercise becomes difficult, and additional weight puts added stress on limbs and joints. Added weight also causes increased risk of heart and circulation problems, digestive disorders and decreased resistance to disease. Also, laminitis is a big problem for many overweight horses and ponies. fat pony

Top-10 signs that your horse or pony is too fat...

1. He has a really big belly
2. The girth or cinch you used last year seems to have shrunk
3. When you run your hand over his ribcage, you cannot feel his ribs at all
4. His neck is really "cresty," or thick on top
5. When you go for a ride, he's out of breath after only a little exercise
6. He's so wide, he gets stuck when you lead him out of his stall
7. When you put him in the trailer, a tire blows out.
8. Two horses or ponies his size will not fit in your two-horse trailer
9. When he steps on your foot, it hurts worse than it did when he wasn't too fat
10. He can't outrun the veterinarian when it's time for vaccinations

Horses become overweight when they store excess energy as fat. If your horse or pony is too fat, you probably need to give him less feed or increase his exercise, or both. Talk to your parents, trainer or veterinarian to develop a plan for taking off the extra weight. Remember, make all feeding and exercise changes gradually; if you make changes too fast, your horse or pony might get sick!

Nutrition Fast Fact:

Question: Which nutrient is the most costly element in your horse's feed?

- a) protein
- b) vitamins
- c) energy
- d) minerals

Answer: energy