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SNACKS FOR THE INSULIN RESISTANT HORSE

Insulin resistant horses, such as those with Cushing's Disease and Equine Metabolic Syndrome, are very sensitive to sugary snacks such as peppermints and cookies. Even apples and carrots are too risky for these horses. Avoiding these types of snacks can avoid the insulin induced laminitis that these horses are prone to. Here are a few guidelines.

Absolutely nothing that contains grains, flour, processed fats, sugar, honey or molasses.
Bread and cookies are the worst.

No fruits, except small amounts of cherries, plums or prunes. No carrots, apples or pears!

Hay cubes are safe and a handy treat. They should be free of sugar and molasses.

Feed vegetables. Celery, parsley, broccoli and the crunchy center of lettuce are usually well received. Cauliflower is a favorite.

Apple peelings, as long as there are no chunks of apple attached, are ok in small amounts.

Raw seeds, such as peanuts, pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds and soybeans can be fed in small palmfuls. Make sure they are not roasted, flavored, or contain added fat.

Plain, low fat, unsweetened yogurt can be added to anything to make it more palatable.

Finally, horses can live very well without snacks. If your horse refuses safe snacks, he may just have to do without. He may miss them, but it is better than risking a laminitic episode.