

Side bone

This is the name given to the mineralisation of the lateral cartilage regions of the hoof, protruding above the level of the coronary band.

It seems to be caused by excessive force travelling through the foot. It is more commonly seen in the front feet, and is typical of heavier breeds or older horses. Long term foot imbalance can also be a contributing factor.

Interestingly, the presence of Side bone is often an incidental finding; this means that we often learn of its presence while examining the horse for other reasons. It is frequently not the cause of lameness. When lameness does occur as a consequence of side bone, nerve blocks and later MRI can be performed, if required, to identify whether or not the side bone is truly the root of the problem. Lameness can resolve when formation of the side bone is complete or a fractured side bone is healed.

To help prevent side bone from forming, ensure that your horse's feet are kept well balanced and that they are regularly trimmed or shod. Also, avoid lots of work on hard ground i.e. roads.

The left radiographic image below shows a more normal looking foot, whereas the right image obviously shows the formation of side bone.

