

KPU in Horses – Diagnosis Checklist

This checklist is designed to help you and your vet decide whether testing for KPU (Kryptopyrroluria) might be worthwhile. KPU can present with a wide range of symptoms, so not every horse will display all of these.

Important UK Context: In the UK, many equine vets are not yet familiar with or supportive of KPU as a recognised condition. If your vet is unfamiliar, you may need to work alongside an experienced practitioner who can interpret results and provide a tailored support plan, while keeping your vet informed.

General Health & Performance

- Fatigue or poor stamina despite regular work
- Slow recovery after exercise
- Poor topline despite adequate nutrition
- Difficulty building muscle

Digestive Issues

- Faecal water syndrome
- Chronic diarrhoea or intermittent loose droppings
- Recurrent mild colic symptoms
- Poor appetite or fussy eating

Skin & Coat

- Mud fever / pastern dermatitis
- Persistent or seasonal itching
- Dull coat or slow coat changes
- Recurrent skin infections

Hoof & Limb Health

- Laminitis (especially repeated or unexplained episodes)
- Tendon or ligament problems without obvious injury
- Slow healing of injuries

Respiratory & Immune

- Chronic cough or nasal discharge
- Recurrent infections
- Allergies or hypersensitivities

Step 2 - History & Risk Factors

- Long-term haylage feeding or structured chaff diets
- Previous severe illness or long antibiotic use
- Known hindgut acidosis or imbalanced microbiome
- High stress levels or frequent travel
- History of toxin exposure (mouldy forage, contaminated water, certain pasture plants)

Step 3 - Veterinary Blood Work Indicators

- Low-normal red blood cell count or haemoglobin
- Low serum zinc and/or selenium
- Altered liver enzyme values
- Possible low albumin or total protein

Next Steps if You Suspect KPU

- Consult your vet about a KPU-specific blood test panel
- If needed, seek a practitioner experienced in KPU protocols who can work alongside your vet
- Begin gut-liver support and micronutrient replenishment under professional guidance