

# Chronic Progressive Lymphedema (CPL)



## What is chronic progressive lymphedema (CPL)?

- Debilitating skin condition that occurs primarily in draft horses
- Characterized by swelling, thickening, and scarring of skin on lower legs
- Progresses throughout the life of the horse, often resulting in disfigurement, lameness, disability and premature death in some cases
- The cause is unknown, but there is likely a genetic component based on the high incidence in affected breeds.

## What you can do to keep your horse healthy:

- CPL is likely multifactorial and has an underlying genetic component, but no exact cause(s) has been identified.
- There is no "cure" for CPL, but intensive management protocols can slow disease progression and improve quality of life.
- There is currently no clear path to preventing the disease in susceptible breeds.

### Signs

Thickening of lower legs  
Infections  
Firm skin folds  
Skin nodules  
Lesions extend up legs  
Exudates between folds

### Transmission

No cause(s) identified  
Likely genetic and multifactorial

### Treatment

Antibiotics  
Manual lymph drainage massage  
Keep feathers trimmed  
Compression bandages  
Exercise

*\*If your horse needs medical care, contact the Large Animal Clinic at (530) 752-1393.*



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