"If a horse has thin soles or is prone to bruising ... protect them with shoes, etc.,” says Bras. “Keep the feet balanced and address any problems.

"Good hoof care that leaves adequate sole for protection and develops a snug and uniform sole junction is the best line of prevention," says Lyle. "A hoof tester exam applying focal force is often vital to localizing an abscess within the confines of structures, leading to abscesses.)"

"Clinical signs depend on the severity of the infection; therefore, lameness could vary from mild, instability (such as that resulting from severe laminitis) or systemic infections. With the latter, bacteria circulating in the bloodstream get into foot tissues and "set up shop," causing an abscess from within. "Wet conditions are the usual culprit in our area, especially when preceded by dry conditions," says Lyle. "Dirty stalls tend to be wet and contain lots of bacteria that can invade the foot."

"When possible, a veterinarian drains an abscess through the sole for two reasons: One, the crack or wall is thinner and easier to break through. Abscesses that have gone undetected can undermine a large portion of the sole, which might need to be pared away. In such cases the foot might require longer term protection such as a pad or a plate."

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"In very dry conditions the hoof dries out and can shrink slightly like a dried out seal. In very dry conditions the hoof dries out and can shrink slightly like a dried out seal."

"Anytime a horse is on a hot walker, trot, or suddenly changes any part of his exercise, you need to think about what the horse is feeling."

"If the horse has an abscess through the sole, it should be drained and flushed."

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