



NUTRITIONAL FACTS  
ABOUT

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# BIOTIN

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A "B-Complex" Vitamin

THIS FACT SHEET  
HAS BEEN PREPARED BY THE  
PROFESSIONAL NUTRITIONISTS OF

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## SOME FACTS ABOUT BIOTIN

Biotin, which was formerly called Vitamin H, is a B-Complex vitamin that is required in relatively small quantities by most animals. However, several animals, notably ruminants, do not have to receive much, if any, Biotin in their diets because certain bacteria in their digestive systems produce sufficient quantities to satisfy the host animals' nutritional needs.

While horses are not ruminants, they do have a digestive system which, when healthy, maintains very large numbers of microflora, some of which are bacteria producing several B-Complex vitamins, one of which is Biotin. Most of this symbiotic activity takes place in the horse's cecum, often called the "blind-gut."

Few, if any, Biotin deficiency symptoms in horses have been documented. Poultry and swine, when fed some diets, develop lesions of the feet which disappear or diminish when suitable quantities of Biotin are added to their diets.

Several years ago research workers in England tried adding Biotin to the diets of some horses with serious hoof problems. These horses were all confined in stables and were being fed diets containing feeds rarely, if ever, used in the United States. A high percentage of the studied horses demonstrated improved hoof characteristics when fed supplemental Biotin at the rate of **15 mg per horse per day**.

This study is the only known source that establishes a Biotin dosage rate for horses. Therefore, at this time we have to assume that **15 mg of Biotin per horse per day** is the minimum quantity that should be used, **if** Biotin will indeed improve horses' hooves in the United States.

The English studies received a wide distribution in the United States and

created a great deal of interest in Biotin by horse managers.

However, there is a serious problem with Biotin. **It is very expensive!** Retail costs of **15 mg of Biotin per horse per day** is at least .45 ¢ when being provided as the only supplement and an added cost approaching .25 ¢ when included in an existing vitamin an/or mineral supplement.

Many horse supplement manufacturers wanted to take advantage of horse owner's interest in Biotin but did not want to increase their prices drastically. So, what did they do? They added Biotin to their regular and already established supplements in a quantity **far less than the 15 mg per horse per day** used in English studies.

At this time, it would appear that **if your horse needs added Biotin**, he needs not less than **15 mg per day**. You should be aware that feeding a Biotin supplement which does not guarantee at least **15 mg per horse per day** is probably a waste of your time and money. If a supplement you are now feeding or are considering doesn't provide a guarantee as a part of its label, you should assume that it is one of those that is just putting enough in the supplement to be able to claim that it does contain Biotin. You may also assume that the amount of Biotin provided in such supplements is minimal.

Furthermore, if the retail cost of any Biotin supplement is not substantially greater than it would be if it did not contain Biotin, you can be certain it contains very little added Biotin.

Only a very small percentage of horses will benefit from having Biotin added to their diet. Some horses may have something in their diets, which inhibit beneficial bacteria growth in their digestive system and/or contain



compounds, which prevent Biotin from adequately playing its nutritional role.

We have never seen horses being fed raw eggs but uncooked egg whites are known to reduce effectiveness of Biotin.

We have to assume that some horses produce antibodies, which deter the growth of Biotin producing bacteria and thus create a Biotin deficiency.

Biotin is not a medicine, it is a nutritional essential. Your horse will only benefit from added Biotin if he has a deficiency.

If your horse has good, sound hooves, it is highly improbable that he has any need for supplemental Biotin.

If your horse has bad hooves, and you are quite sure such is not being caused by environmental factors, then you should seriously consider the use of at least **15 mg per day** and for a minimum of 9 to 12 months. The hoof walls of horses are like your fingernails; if injured, the damaged portion must be replaced by new growth starting at the coronet band. You must allow sufficient time for the new and, we hope, healthier hoof growth to replace the damaged or unhealthy hoof wall.

If you wish to use a Biotin supplement, we hope you give full consideration to **NORTHWEST HORSE SUPPLEMENT - BIOTIN**. It is available at feed stores, veterinarians and tack shops in 10 lb. (40 feedings) and 25 lb. (100 feedings) bags at the least possible cost to you. Each bag is identified by a red stencil, which guarantees **15 mg of Biotin for your horse each day when consuming 4 oz. daily.**

