The Equine Pain Face
by Karina Bech Gleerup

Lowered ears (the distance between the ears increases at the base)

Contraction of the muscle above the eye (m. levator anguli oculi medialis)

Tense stare

Nostril dilated in the medio-lateral direction (from the midline to the outside)

Tension of the facial muscles

Edged shape of the muzzle with lips pressed together and flattened chin

IMAGE ON RIGHT:
Can you spot the facial expressions of pain described in the illustration? This horse is in pain. (Photo courtesy Karina Bech Gleerup).

IMAGE BELOW LEFT:
The nostril dilated in the medio-lateral direction (from the midline to the outside) is one of the facial expressions of pain. (Photo courtesy Karina Bech Gleerup).

IMAGE BELOW RIGHT:
Can you spot the contraction of the muscle above the eye and the tense stare? This horse is in pain. Photo courtesy Karina Bech Gleerup).