



## **Advisory: Reducing Contamination & Adverse Swab Risks**

Issued 5 August, 2025

---

This advisory offers practical guidance to help trainers reduce the risk of contamination.

### **Responsible Medication Use**

When deciding on treatments, work closely with your veterinarian to choose registered medications that have well-established withdrawal periods. Always speak with your veterinarian about these timeframes and consider building in an extra safety buffer, to minimise any risk. Before administering any drug, verify the horse's identity, use a new sterile needle for each animal, and change gloves between treatments.

You are also required under the Rules to maintain accurate records, listing the horse's identity, medication details, dosage and the administration date/time. It is best to only use commercially manufactured, registered products and ensure they are kept in a secure controlled location with the appropriate labelling.

### **Stable Management & Contamination Control**

Organise your stable to physically separate treated horse(s) from race-ready stock by assigning clearly marked stalls and keep them in quarantine until the medication has cleared its system (use the withdrawal period and buffer as your guide). Designate specific treatment areas and ensure any shared equipment is disinfected thoroughly and allowed time to dry before use.

Pay special attention to powdered oral medications: consider mixing them into dampened feed in an area separate to the feed room and horse boxes, do not re-use feed buckets unless scrubbed clean, and wipe your horse's lips afterward to avoid airborne residues.

If medication is injected, dispose of sharps (needles) and expired drugs through authorised medical waste channels, speak with your vet about how they can assist you in this. Do not dispose of sharps with general refuse.

Whichever route of administration, refresh bedding in treatment stalls daily and schedule a weekly deep clean of all surfaces and maintain routine cleaning of high-touch fixtures using neutral pH detergents.

### **Feed & Supplement Protocols**

Source feed and supplements from reputable equine specialists and ideally have robust quality assurance practices including batch testing and traceability. Inspect feed carefully and adopt a first-in, first-out use schedule. Use products that fully list ingredients to ensure safety and consistency.

## **Staff Hygiene & Awareness**

Ensure staff and contractors are trained and understand their responsibilities to reduce the risk of contamination. Require staff to apply good hygiene practices, such as washing hands or changing disposable gloves before and after treatment tasks. Post reminders in key areas to avoid unsanitary practices, for example, human waste in yard areas has led to detectable residues of human medication or illicit drugs.

## **Personal Medications & Recreational Substances**

Handle personal (human) prescriptions, like inhalers or EpiPens, with the same care as equine medications, for example wear gloves and wash hands afterwards. Store all personal medications in a designated area away from horse areas. Encourage staff to confidentially disclose any personal treatments and adjust their stable responsibilities accordingly. Set clear boundaries regarding recreational substance use.

## **Pets, Livestock & Other Animals**

When other animals on the property need treatment, keep them away from racing stables until any medications have cleared from their system(s). Discuss with your veterinarian if there are risks regarding cross-species contamination. Clearly label their feed, medication and equipment to avoid accidental contamination with racing horses.

## **Additional Strategies to Minimise Positive Samples**

Always double-check each horse's identity before every treatment; a single mistake can lead to a positive result. Never re-use needles or syringes. Oral dosing tools should be dedicated to one medication and cleaned thoroughly between uses. Implement clear labeling on all equipment and medications.

Consider introducing environmental swab checks in high-risk areas, like treatment stalls and tie-up rails, to identify residues. Implement cleaning logs and adjust protocols based on swab findings.

Adopt conservative medication withdrawal practices by assuming detection times may exceed published values or may be impacted by specific factors specific to the individual horse (e.g. metabolic state). If you are in doubt, add at least an extra day or two to your usual safety buffer. A 'better safe than sorry' mindset can avoid an inadvertent positive sample.

## **Safer treatment, cleaner stables**

Reducing the risk of prohibited substance detection or contamination starts with a clear principle: treat only when clinically necessary, using consistent, well-managed stable protocols. Medications may complement but must not replace appropriate rest or rehabilitation. All treatments should be guided by veterinary advice, supported by a diagnosis, and above all prioritise the horse's welfare. Withdrawal periods must be strictly observed. Indiscriminate or frequent use increases the risk of contamination. While treatment supports equine welfare, it must be selective, justified, and controlled. An evidence-based approach reduces costs, eases withdrawal planning, and lowers the risk of breaches.