



## BHA NOTICE: BISPHOSPHONATES

Paragraph 7 of the Running Requirements Code has been updated to state:

*7. A horse must not have been administered with:*

*7.1 any intra-articular corticosteroid on Race day or on any of the 14 clear days before;*

*7.2 any bisphosphonate:*

*7.2.1 before the horse is aged four years (as of 01 January of the horse's year of birth); or*

*7.2.2 on Race day or any of the 30 clear days before;*

A Notice regarding the use of bisphosphonates ([New Stand-Down Period: Bisphosphonates](#)) was published in July 2017, which included the following expectations regarding the use of bisphosphonates in horses racing or intending to race in Great Britain:

- The product used should be licensed for horses in the UK;
- There must be a diagnosis determined by a veterinary surgeon that supports the use of a bisphosphonate as an appropriate treatment; and
- The bisphosphonate must be administered by a veterinary surgeon.

The Rule is intended to cover the use of therapeutic bisphosphonates.

Gamma scintigraphy (bone scan) is a diagnostic imaging technique, which involves the injection of a radioactive substance that is bound to a bisphosphonate. The bisphosphonates used in gamma scintigraphy are administered at a low dose and are not licensed for use in horses in the UK. At present, there is no evidence to suggest that they have a therapeutic effect on the horse.

The BHA's position is that the use of gamma scintigraphy, when advised by a veterinary surgeon, is in the best interests of the horse and to discourage such practice may be detrimental to the welfare of the horse. The BHA's approach is that, at its discretion, it will implement an exception to paragraph 7 of the Running Requirements Code for the use of bisphosphonates which are administered for the purposes of gamma scintigraphy in specific, documented cases. The exception permits both the administration of bisphosphonates to the horse under the age of four years and bisphosphonates administered to the horse within 30 days of a race in which the horse is declared to run (however the exception will not permit bisphosphonates administered to the horse for gamma scintigraphy purposes on the day of the race).

It should be noted that any horse to which **therapeutic** bisphosphonates are administered under the age of four years will not be qualified to run under the BHA Rules of Racing until:

For horses aged 4 years or over: receipt of a negative test;

For horses aged between 2 and 4 years: completion of a 12 month suspension from racing and receipt of a negative test; and

For horses aged under 2 years: completion of a minimum 12 month suspension from racing, reached 3 years of age and receipt of a negative test.