

BHA NOTICE – USE OF OMEPRAZOLE

The British Horseracing Authority (BHA) would like to draw the attention of licensed Trainers and prescribing veterinary surgeons to an updated approach to how we regulate the **oral administration** of the class of ulcer controlling medications called proton pump inhibitors.

The BHA will now permit the clinical use of oral proton pump inhibitor products up to the day of racing, but they must not be administered on raceday until after the horse has run.

A proton pump inhibitor reduces the amount of acid produced in the stomach, which is a major cause of gastric ulcers in horses. The most commonly known example of this medication is omeprazole, which is present in products like GastroGard.

The previously published detection time for omeprazole was 48 hours but we know that ulcers can reappear within 36 hours of omeprazole being withdrawn. As omeprazole is not considered performance-enhancing, we have updated our requirements to help reduce the likelihood of ulcers reforming in the lead up to a race.

This is a position unanimously supported by both the BHA Veterinary Committee and the National Trainers Federation's Equine Welfare Panel.

This change only applies to **oral preparations** of these medications, and they must still be prescribed by a veterinary surgeon and recorded in the horse's medication book. Moreover, it will still be an offence under the [Rules of Racing](#) if the drug is administered on raceday before racing.

To help avoid interrupting a course of treatment, administration will be permitted after racing, but only once the horse has left the racecourse or, if staying overnight, only with the express permission of a BHA veterinary officer.

It is also worth noting that while this change aligns Britain with the position applied in the US, Australia and Japan, **longer treatment withdrawal requirements** remain in place across European jurisdictions. As ever, if you are planning to race your horses abroad, please check the rules with the jurisdiction in question before travelling.

We have developed a short set of **frequently asked questions** to support this change, which are included below. Please do read these in full, as they provide important information about the requirements, guidance and restrictions for use.

For more information on the relevant Rules of Racing, please see:

- [Rule D – Horse Welfare and Management](#)
- [Rule K – Anti-Doping](#)
- [10. Running Requirements Code \(5\)](#).

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is a proton pump inhibitor?

A proton pump inhibitor acts to suppress acid production in the stomach which is the major cause of gastric ulcers. An example of a proton pump inhibitor is omeprazole which is the active drug in products like GastroGard. There are other products in this class that are licensed and used. Please consult your vet if you are in doubt as to what drugs fall into this category.

2. What changes has the BHA made to the use of a proton pump inhibitor?

The BHA will now permit the clinical use of oral proton pump inhibitor products up to the day of racing, but not on raceday until after the horse has run. This change will apply to oral administration only and does not include the injectable use of omeprazole.

3. Do I have to record this in the medication book?

Yes, all medications administered to horses in licenced yards must be recorded in an approved manner. Please ensure that the administration of omeprazole is recorded accurately, particularly when used around a raceday.

4. Can a horse be administered the drug if it has travelled the day before racing and is staying overnight in racecourse stables?

Yes, with permission of the BHA Veterinary Officer. The stable manager must be made aware so that the horse's stable receives a level 2 clean.

5. Can the drug be administered after racing?

The horse may be administered their daily dose of treatment once it has left the racecourse property after racing – and ideally when having returned home – so that treatment is not interrupted. If the horse is staying overnight in racecourse stables, once it has been cleared as not being required for testing after racing, then permission must be given by the Veterinary Officer. The stable manager must also be made aware so that the horse's stable receives a level 2 clean.

6. Does this mean that the use of proton pump inhibitors will no longer be regulated?

No. Proton pump inhibitors should not be used on raceday until after the race itself, and only then once the horse has left the racehorse stables or, if staying overnight, only with permission from a BHA veterinary officer. It will still be an offence under the [Rules of Racing](#) if the drug is administered on raceday before racing. In addition, omeprazole should not be administered without veterinary advice and a valid veterinary prescription.

7. What is the position of other racing jurisdictions?

The change to Britain's approach puts us in line with the US, Australia and Japan. However, European countries continue to have longer treatment withdrawal times, including Ireland, which remains 48-hours before raceday. If travelling abroad to race, please do check with the jurisdiction in question.