



BHA NOTICE: BISPHOSPHONATES

The following Rule was brought into effect on 10 August 2017:

Schedule (B)3 – Requirements for horse to run

11B The horse must not have been administered

- 11.B.1 any bisphosphonate under the age of three years and six months as determined by its recorded date of birth, or
- 11.B.2 any bisphosphonate on the day of the race or on any of the 30 days before the day of the race in which the horse is declared to run.

A Notice regarding this amendment ([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 Schedule (B)3 paragraph 11 B 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 three years and six months 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 three years and six months will not be qualified to run under the BHA Rules of Racing at any point in its life.