

What's in your greyhound's food bowl?

Avoiding positive swabs from contamination through knackery meat and personal medication

GRV has previously issued warnings about feeding knackery meat to racing greyhounds and would like to remind all participants that those who choose to do so take the risk that prohibited substances may be inadvertently administered to their greyhounds, regardless of any assurances provided by the supplier. Knackery meat from livestock and horses containing drug residues is the most common source of feed-related positive swabs. As per Figure 1, if livestock are treated with veterinary drugs shortly before slaughter, the meat will usually be processed as “unfit for human consumption” and sold on as knackery meat or pet food. Residues of drugs may still be present in meat and then be consumed by greyhounds. Many of the drugs used in livestock are Prohibited Substances, and some are Permanently Banned Prohibited Substances. Medications which may have been used in livestock and could return a positive drug swab include:

- Antibiotics: procaine penicillin used to treat infection in farm animals.
- Anti-inflammatory drugs or pain killers: used to treat lame or sick animals (e.g. flunixin, dexamethasone).
- Local and general anaesthetics: used for procedures such as caesareans in cattle (e.g. lignocaine). Some (e.g. ketamine) are Permanently Banned Prohibited Substances and greyhounds must always be free of these substances, including Out of Competition Tests.
- Lethal Drugs: mainly pentobarbitone which is used by veterinarians for humane euthanasia. This may swab positive for weeks after ingestion.

Other sources of feed-related positive swabs include bread or other baked goods containing poppy seeds (morphine/codeine), foods containing chocolate (theobromine) and liquids such as tea, coffee or energy drinks (caffeine) or other products from ‘health food shops’ or gyms that commonly contain caffeine or other stimulants.

The use of human medications, including over-the-counter or prescribed, can produce positive swabs due to cross contamination. Extra precaution should be taken with the use of personal inhalers (e.g. salbutamol), topical gels (e.g. anti-inflammatory gels), patches and creams. Always wash your hands after taking your medications, especially if you have to break the tablet (e.g. heart medication). Reduce the risk by avoiding storing, carrying, or administering any personal medication around greyhounds. Practice good hygiene, including when using the bathroom as drugs are eliminated via urine and faeces. Consider wearing gloves, especially when preparing feeds, or handling dogs to minimise any licking of sweat or drug residues.

To protect the integrity of the sport, the trainer is responsible for positive swabs whenever they are reported in a sample, regardless of the drug level measured, and regardless of whether exposure was accidental or deliberate, and it should be noted that often they can't be distinguished.

To view GRV's guidelines on Feeding, Medication and Supplements: <https://greyhoundcare.grv.org.au/health-and-well-being/feeding-medication-supplement-guidelines/#General>

Further relevant veterinary information including further information on prohibited substances can be found on the Stewards' General Alerts page: <https://fasttrack.grv.org.au/StewardsHearing/GeneralAlert>

