



FACT SHEET

Cobalt use in greyhounds



Cobalt is a naturally occurring trace element that is normally present in greyhounds at very low levels as a result of normal dietary intake.

Cobalt is also present in the structure of vitamin B12. The urinary threshold for cobalt under the rules is 100ng/mL.

HOW WAS THE COBALT THRESHOLD DETERMINED?

The threshold was determined following a national population survey that measured urinary cobalt levels in 762 greyhounds sampled on a race day.

The median value was 3.44 ng/mL and 74% of samples were below 10 ng/mL.

The threshold has been set at 100 ng/mL to allow for a robust margin between normal amounts of cobalt supplementation and the threshold.

TRAINERS SHOULD USE CAUTION WHEN:

- Using products that contain cobalt close to racing as this may inadvertently lead to a rise in urinary cobalt levels.
- Providing regular administration of supplements by injection or larger 'off-label' doses.
- Combining the administration of registered supplements and other cobalt containing products as this can cause elevated cobalt levels. Trainers are advised to avoid the use of these supplements close to racing.



DIETARY SUPPLEMENTS

There is generally no medical requirement for cobalt supplementation to be added to a healthy balanced diet.

If a vet advises supplements are required, they should be given following the labelled advice of the manufacturer and ensure an adequate withdrawal time is followed prior to racing.

WHAT PRODUCTS CONTAIN COBALT?

NSW greyhound racing industry participants can use the Race Well substance validator smart phone application to determine if a particular medication and/or supplement is safe to administer to a greyhound.

Use of Race Well will help to minimise the risk of exceeding cobalt the threshold. It is free for all participants to download.



Andriod phones



iPhones





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WHAT IS WITHDRAWAL TIME?

Withdrawal time is the time administration of a substance should cease to safely assume the substance has cleared the greyhound's system and will thus not test positive.

Always seek advice from your vet regarding appropriate withdrawal times.

FACTORS WHICH CAN INFLUENCE WITHDRAWAL TIME?

There are many factors that can influence withdrawal times including;

- An animal's general health status, its physiology, metabolism, hydration status, fitness level, training regime, nutritional and dietary supplementation and concurrent medical treatment.
- Dose rate (i.e. the amount given per kg) – a higher dose will take longer to remove from the body system and could be detrimental to the dog's health. Combining similar supplements may also increase the dose rate as each may contain cobalt.

- Treatment duration and frequency as a cumulative effect could occur where supplements are given for extended periods, particularly when this is against the directions of the manufacturer.
- Type of administration as injection of cobalt supplements will lead to much greater levels of cobalt and therefore requires longer withholding periods prior to racing than orally administered cobalt. Oral administration of some highly concentrated products can still lead to a breach of the cobalt threshold and require an adequate withholding period.
- Pharmaceutical preparation as different cobalt salts contain different amounts of cobalt. The preparations may also have different properties that result in different rates of absorption.

Careful consideration of the above factors and adequate veterinary advice is important prior to administering substances containing cobalt, particularly by injection. More conservative withdrawal times may need to be implemented.

All participants are subject to the rules and are responsible for compliance with the rules which include, amongst other things, provisions relating to prohibited substances.

This fact sheet cannot be used as a defence in the event of a breach of the rules. Always seek advice from your vet regarding appropriate withdrawal times.

