

HOW CAN I PREVENT NEW MASTITIS INFECTIONS AT DRYING OFF?

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Hygienic administration is essential, whether you are using antibiotic dry cow tubes, internal teat sealant or both, to prevent bacteria entering the quarter and causing infection. Remember, good hygiene is what will prevent new infections, and what happens at drying off this year will influence the incidence of new mastitis infections next year.



STEP 1 • PREPARATION IS KEY!

- ▶ Clip tails in the days beforehand, so that things are as clean as possible on the day of drying off.
- ▶ Plan for the time and labour that treatment takes - more than one person is usually needed to allow you to do the job well.
- ▶ Have everything ready in the parlour before you start:
 - » Cow markers.
 - » Disposable gloves.
 - » 70% alcohol (i.e. surgical spirits) and cotton balls, or disinfecting teat wipes.
 - » Tubes of dry cow antibiotic and/or internal teat sealant.
 - » Good source of light, such as a head torch.
 - » Paper towel.
- ▶ Don't dry off cows during milking - draft them off and bring them back into a clean parlour, and after you have had a good breakfast!
- ▶ Don't be afraid to postpone if the weather is wet on the day you had planned to dry off - it is very hard to be hygienic when tails and udders are wet.



IT'S NOT AN ENDURANCE COMPETITION!

If you want to dry off the last cow as well as you did the first cow, don't try and dry off more than 20 cows per person in one day.



STEP 2 • MARK THE COWS

- ▶ Clearly mark the cows for treatment before you start, to avoid any mistakes later.

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STEP 3 • STERILISE THE TEAT ENDS

- ▶ If the teats are muddy, wash and dry them thoroughly.
- ▶ Wash your arms and hands with soap, drying with a disposable towel, before putting on clean gloves.
- ▶ Sterilise the teat ends by vigorously rubbing the teat opening with a teat wipe or cotton ball and 70% alcohol for at least ten seconds. Repeat as necessary until no more dirt is seen on the wipe/cotton ball.
- ▶ To avoid brushing against the sterilised teats with your arms, sterilise the two teats furthest away first (front teats) and then the two closest (rear teats). Administer the tubes in reverse i.e. treat the two teats closest to you first, followed by the two furthest away.
- ▶ Alternatively, one teat can be sterilised and treated at a time, starting with front teats. This may be more practical if more than one tube is being infused into each quarter e.g. antibiotic + teat sealant. Use a standardised order e.g. front left, then clockwise around the udder.



STEP 4 • ADMINISTER THE TUBES

- ▶ Remove the cap of the tube and, without touching its tip with your hand, gently insert the nozzle into the teat canal.
- ▶ Massage dry cow antibiotic up into the quarter - **DO NOT** massage the teat sealant! Teat sealant must remain within the bottom part of the teat to create an effective barrier.
- ▶ If dry cow antibiotic and teat sealant are being used together, repeat the teat sterilisation step in between and make sure the teat sealant goes in last.
- ▶ Ensure your forearms and gloved hands are cleaned in between treating the cows, and if gloves are damaged, get a new pair.



STEP 5 • THOROUGHLY TEAT DIP/SPRAY TREATED QUARTERS



STEP 6 • RECORD COW ID, DATE AND DETAILS OF PRODUCT(S) USED

- ▶ Try to keep cows standing in a clean area, for the first two hours after drying off, until teat ends have closed and the risk of bacteria gaining access to the quarter has reduced.
- ▶ Keep cows in a dry and clean environment after drying off and check them daily for any signs of swollen quarters or illness.



KEEP THE TUBES STERILE

Do not immerse syringes in water! If tubes need to be warmed, place the bucket of tubes in a bucket of warm water, or keep the tubes in a warm room prior to use or in an inside pocket.

If the end of a tube is contaminated at any time i.e. touches anything apart from the teat end, discard it and use a new one.



REMEMBER

When infusing the teat sealant, gently pinch the base of the teat closed (where the teat meets the udder) to ensure the teat sealant stays in the teat cistern.



FARM GUIDELINES

For more information, see CellCheck Farm Guidelines 16-18, and Management Notes D & E.