

Administer dry cow treatment (DCT) as recommended

- Avoiding injuries
- Udder marking
- Disinfecting teat ends
- Recording treatment
- Withholding periods
- Drying-off environment

Administration of dry cow treatment (DCT) has some hazards, for cows and operators. It is critical that it is carried out properly.

It is easy to introduce bacteria into the teat if the teat end is not disinfected properly, or it is contaminated before it has sealed. Infection with environmental bacteria can cause severe mastitis.

Operators can be injured by cows during administration of DCT; it is important to take your time and have sufficient help.

Antibiotic residues in milk and meat must be avoided by observing the minimum dry periods and withholding periods after calving which are specified for each product.

This is particularly important where cows are culled during the dry period, or calve earlier than expected.

17.1 Plan for the time and effort that treating cows with DCT takes

Administration of DCT is a critical and difficult job. Ensure that responsible operators are trained adequately in the procedure and supervised well.

To do a good job with DCT, one person can only handle about 20 cows per hour.

More than one person is often needed to do the job well and reduce the hazards associated with the procedure, especially if cows are not used to having their teats handled.

Select reasonably sized groups of cows to be treated after any one milking, especially in seasonal herds.

If practicable, at the previous milking, draft out the next batch of cows to be treated. Milk and treat these cows before bringing the remainder of the herd through the parlour. This ensures maximum cleanliness of the plant at the time of treatment.

Wash out the parlour between batches of cows if several batches are to be treated after one milking.



Staff training

Proper teat end preparation and using the correct intramammary infusion technique are essential.

Consider a refresher demonstration for staff involved before drying-off starts.

Ask your veterinary practitioner or CellCheck advisor for this staff training.

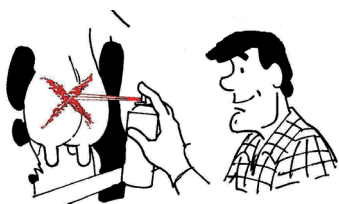
Refer to Management Note C
Guide to safe implementation of selective dry cow treatment

Refer to Guideline 14
Decide dry cow management strategy.



Take a break

Do not dry-off cows when you are stressed, tired and hungry. If you wish you are not doing the job, stop. Mistakes made now cannot be corrected later and will leave cows at risk of mastitis in the following lactation.



Refer to Management Note D
The correct way to give dry cow intramammary treatments.

17.2 Discuss your drying off strategy with your vet, and identify the animals that need antibiotic treatment at drying off

Selective DCT will reduce antibiotic use. It is not without risk, particularly in herds with udder health challenges that require both a detailed on and off farm investigation by your mastitis control team to understand the challenges involved.

17.3 Do not use antibiotic DCT on cows that are going to be culled

If animals that have received DCT are subsequently added to the cull list, adhere to the relevant meat withdrawal times for those cull cows.

17.4 Use antibiotic DCT only at the cow's last milking for the current lactation

Antibiotic DCT is registered only for use immediately after a cow's last milking. Use of antibiotics in any way other than as per manufacturers written instructions is called off-label use. Off-label use is strongly discouraged because drug residue risks increase and cure rates are likely to be reduced.

17.5 Mark the cows for antibiotic treatment

By marking the cows before you start you will ensure you treat the correct cows, and also avoid any mistakes where a cow can mistakenly get left out without being marked. Use spray paint on the udder, or tail tape to ensure that all milkers can clearly see that the cows have been treated with antibiotic.

17.6 Administer the treatments as recommended ensuring the teat ends are sanitised properly

There is further detail in Management Note D about this process.

17.7 Treat all quarters of cows to receive antibiotic DCT except quarters that have been dried off for some time i.e. cows milked as 'three teaters'

If a quarter is dry, absorption of the antibiotic DCT in the quarter will be changed. Administering a dry cow intramammary tube into these quarters is off-label use. Off-label use is strongly discouraged because drug residue risks increase and cure rates are likely to be reduced. Injectable antibiotics may be used in these cases- consult with your veterinary practitioner.

17.8 Dip teats with freshly made up teat disinfectant after treatment

Even if you usually spray, dipping is preferable after DCT to ensure complete coverage of the teat. Ensure teat dip is changed regularly to avoid any cross contamination between cows at this time.

17.9 Double check that you have correctly marked the udder (e.g. with a spray paint) so that cows that have received antibiotic DCT can be easily recognised

This allows easy recognition if cows re-join the herd in error.

17.10 Record cow ID, date and product details of all DCT

If cows calve early, or a decision to cull them during the dry period is made, the date of treatment and the withholding period of the particular product must be known.

For each batch of cows treated, mark the earliest calving date allowable for the meat withholding period and minimum dry period to pass. Check the label.

17.11 Keep cows in clean areas immediately after dry cow treatment

Avoid allowing them to lie down on bare ground or areas that are soiled with manure in the two hours immediately after you give DCT.

17.12 Put the cows in a dry, clean area (not heavily soiled with manure, no bare ground, no exposure to dairy effluent) for 3 - 4 days after dry cow treatment

Outdoors - This paddock should be well away from the milking herd. It is essential that cows treated with antibiotic DCT are not able to re-join the herd in error. If they enter the dairy they will probably let down milk (reducing teat plug formation) and may have the clusters put on, leading to antibiotic contamination of the bulk tank.

Indoors - the cubicles should be clean and dry. They should be cleaned and limed twice daily.

17.13 To minimise milk leakage, do not walk cows long distances for 3 - 4 days after DCT is administered



Internal teat sealers require a different method of administration:

- If using in conjunction with antibiotic DCT, administer the teat sealer last.
- Gently close off the top of the teat and insert the tube nozzle.
- **Do not** massage the udder after infusing the product.

Refer to Management Note E
Using teat sealers in your herd.

Refer to Management Note F
Guide to withholding periods after use of after use of antibiotic DCT

