Recommendations for use of herbal products and homeopathic remedies

- Exercise caution in using these products in proximity to a race. Despite label claims, these products should be considered "unknowns," and their administration can result in a positive test.
- Consider clearance testing before entering a horse that has been treated with these products. (Consult your regulatory authority to determine what samples need to be submitted.)

Our Mission

To develop and promote national uniform rules, policies and testing; coordinate research and educational programs seeking to ensure the integrity of racing and the health and welfare of racehorses and participants; and develop programs to protect the interests of the racing public.

RMTC
Racing Medication & Testing Consortium

Racing Medication & Testing Consortium

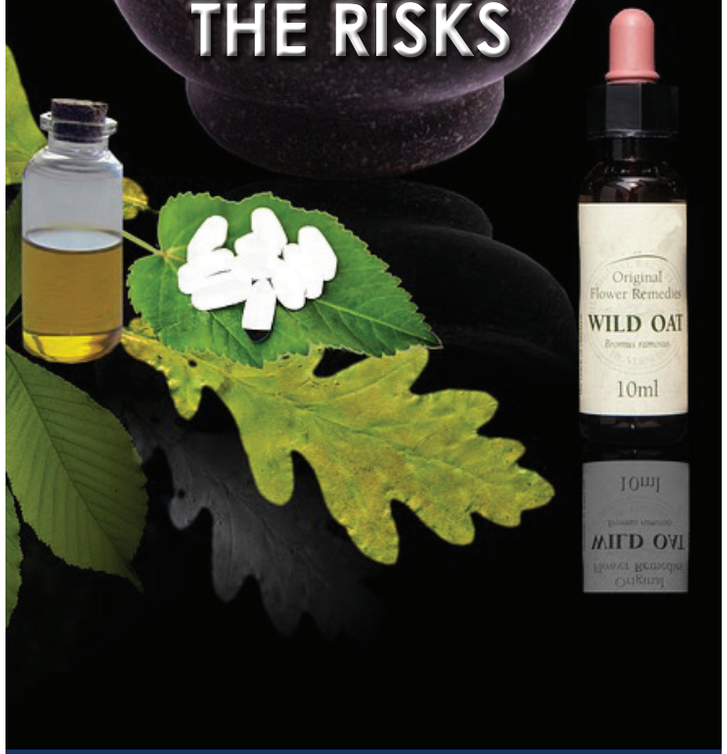
821 Corporate Drive, Lexington, KY 40503

(859) 224-2844

contactus@rmtcnet.com

rmtcnet.com

HERBAL AND HOMEOPATHIC REMEDIES: UNDERSTANDING THE RISKS



RMTC
Racing Medication & Testing Consortium

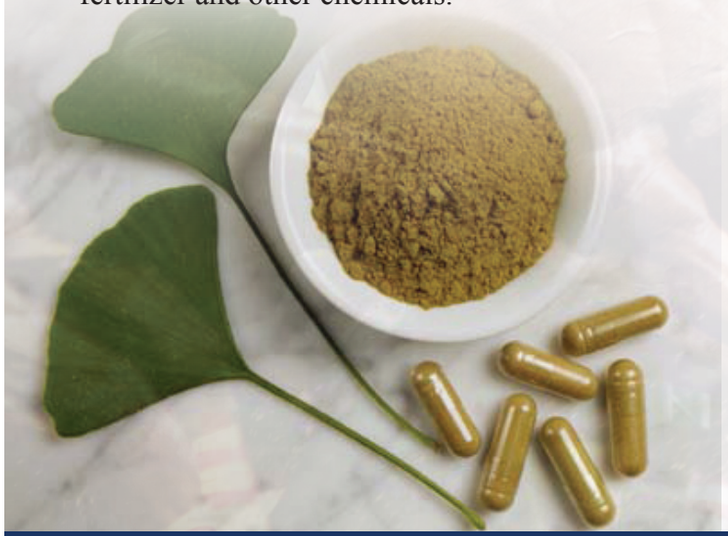
HERBAL AND HOMEOPATHIC REMEDIES: UNDERSTANDING THE RISKS

Homeopathy is the practice of treating disease by administering small amounts of a substance that when given in larger amounts to healthy patients would cause the same effects as the disease being treated.

Myth: It's got to be safe if it's "all natural."

This is a good time to remember that heroin comes from poppies, cocaine from the coca plant, and marijuana — well, you know.

"All natural" identifies the origin of a substance and is, in generic terms, the opposite of "synthetic." It does not mean that a product is safe and it does not indicate purity, potency or effect. It does not mean free of prohibited substances. "All natural" also does not mean healthy or organic. Lawn clippings are all natural but may be loaded with pesticides, fertilizer and other chemicals.



There can be wide and undocumented variation in the active ingredients in herbal products and homeopathic compounds.

Think hay, here. Hay is dried and cured plant material, as are herbal products. Many factors, including growing conditions, weed control and stage of maturity at cutting, affect the quality of hay. Hay can lose nutrients because of extended storage, exposure to sunlight, or moisture.

Herbal products are similarly affected. The label may list the contents of an herbal supplement, but there is no way of knowing if it is accurate, if extraneous plant material is also present, how long the product has been stored, and under what conditions. It's also not possible to know with any certainty what actually is in that scoop of supplement you add to your horse's feed.

Herbal and homeopathic products are unregulated.

This does not mean that herbal and homeopathic remedies are inherently safe; rather, many contain regulated substances that have serious consequences if detected in a post-race sample. The lack of regulatory oversight in their production and distribution should not be interpreted as an endorsement of safety or efficacy. It does mean that these products have not been independently evaluated for content, purity, stability or effect, and the risk in using them lies solely with the user.

One product label declared, "No caffeine added," but the cocoa beans listed as ingredients contained a significant amount of caffeine, which resulted in a positive post-race test.

This lack of regulation also means that raw-product sources can change from one batch to the next — resulting in a product that may be free of banned substances at one time but contain a prohibited substance the next time. Improperly sourced raw materials have been associated with human deaths.

A trainer had a supplement analyzed and no prohibited substances were detected. Confident in the product, he didn't have a subsequently purchased batch analyzed, which turned out to contain multiple substances associated with Class A penalties.