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of Health



Department
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Food & Rural Affairs

European Antibiotic Awareness Day (EAAD)

Key Messages

Antibiotic Resistance - EU Antibiotic Awareness Day 18 November

Key Messages – general

- Antibiotics are essential medicines for treating bacterial infections in both humans and animals.
- Antibiotics are losing their effectiveness at an increasing rate.
- Bacteria can adapt and find ways to survive the effects of an antibiotic. They become ‘antibiotic resistant’, so that the antibiotic no longer works. The more you use an antibiotic, the more bacteria become resistant to it.
- It is important we use antibiotics in the right way, the right drug, at the right dose, at the right time, and for the right duration to slow down the development of antibiotic resistance.
- There are very few new antibiotics in the development pipeline, which is why it is important we use our existing antibiotics wisely and make sure these life-saving medicines continue to stay effective for ourselves and future generations.
- Many antibiotics are prescribed and used for mild infections when they don’t need to be. All colds and most coughs, sinusitis, otitis media (earache) and sore throats often get better without antibiotics.

Key Messages – strategy

- Antibiotic resistance is a complex global public health issue. To tackle it effectively requires an integrated approach at a national, European and international level across a number of sectors including human, animal and the environment.
- The UK is signed-up to the WHO European Strategic Action Plan on Antibiotic Resistance, which encourages sharing of information, developing effective interventions to prevent and slow down the development of multi-resistant bacteria, and working together to stimulate the development of new drugs and diagnostics.
- In the UK, we have an integrated “one health” approach strategy that includes surveillance of antibiotic resistant infections, promoting responsible prescribing and use of antibiotics, and good infection control measures to prevent their spread in both humans and animals.



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Key Messages – EAAD 18 Nov

- European Antibiotic Awareness Day on 18 November is a European-wide annual event that aims to raise awareness on how to use antibiotics in a responsible way that will help keep them effective for the future.
- GPs continue to be encouraged to only prescribe antibiotics when they are needed and not for self-limiting mild infections such as colds and most coughs, sinusitis, earache and sore throats.
- For EAAD, the Royal College of General Practitioners is promoting a web-based toolkit to assist primary care prescribers.
- Department of Health small video clips are available from its website, YouTube and the Patient.co.uk website for use around the EAAD period, reminding the public that antibiotics do not work for colds, most coughs and sore throats. These are also available in 'QTV' format by request from AMR@dh.gsi.gov.uk
- The Department of Health has also published a range of other materials on its website to support local EAAD activities: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-of-health/series/european-antibiotic-awareness-day-resources>
- EAAD was initiated by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) in 2008 and is held on 18 November every year.
- EAAD coincides with the US Antibiotics Awareness Week, and similar programmes in Australia and Canada.
- Defra and a number of Veterinary Bodies are raising awareness of EAAD 2013 through various activities to further promote responsible use of antibiotics by vets, farmers and pet owners (animal keepers).

Patients – additional messages

- Antibiotic resistance is a threat to your health.
- Good hygiene measures are essential in reducing the risk of spread of bacteria and is especially important in households with vulnerable individuals e.g. immune compromised.
- Antibiotics do not work for ALL colds, or for most coughs, sore throats or earache.



The table below shows you how long these illnesses normally last, what you can do to ease your symptoms and when you should go back to your GP or contact NHS Direct.

Illness	Lasts on average	What you can do to ease the symptoms	When should you (or your child) go back to your GP or contact NHS Direct (Listed in order of urgency, with most urgent symptoms first)
Ear infection	4 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have plenty of rest. • Drink enough fluids to avoid feeling thirsty. • Ask your local pharmacist to recommend medicines to bring down your temperature or control pain (or both). • Other things you can do suggested by a GP or nurse. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If you develop a severe headache and are sick. 2. If your skin is very cold or has a strange colour, or you develop an unusual rash. 3. If you feel confused or have slurred speech or are very drowsy. 4. If you have difficulty breathing. Signs that suggest breathing problems can include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breathing quickly; • Turning blue around the lips and the skin below the mouth; and • Skin between or above the ribs getting sucked or pulled in with every breath. 5. If you develop chest pain. 6. If you have difficulty swallowing or are drooling. 7. If you cough up blood. 8. If hearing problems develop or if there is fluid coming out of your ears.
Sore throat	1 week		
Common cold	1 ½ weeks		
Sinusitis	2 ½ weeks		
Cough or bronchitis	3 weeks		

- Antibiotics are important medicines and should only be taken when prescribed by a health professional.
- When antibiotics are prescribed by a health professional it is important that you always take them as directed and complete the course.
- Antibiotics can have side effects as they upset the natural balance of bacteria potentially resulting in diarrhoea and/or thrush. The use of inappropriate antibiotics may also allow other more harmful bacteria to increase.



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- Antibiotic resistant bacteria don't just affect you, they can spread to other people (and animals) in close contact with you.

Prescriber – additional messages

- When antibiotic treatment is needed, the antibiotic should be tailored for the patient, the likely site of infection and causative organism.
- Patients receiving antibiotics should receive the right drug, at the right dose, at the right time and the right duration for the individual.
- Unnecessary lengthy duration of antibiotic treatment and inappropriate use of broad-spectrum antibiotics should be avoided.
- Communication is key. Studies show that patients are less likely to ask their GP for antibiotics if advised what to expect in the course of an illness and given a self-care plan.
- Good infection prevention and control measures reduce cross infection and therefore the number of patients who need antibiotics and reduce selection for more resistance, establishing a virtuous circle.
- Specific guidance for professionals is available in our '*Start Smart then Focus*' guidance. This aims to promote best practice on prescribing antibiotics in hospitals and is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/antimicrobial-stewardship-start-smart-then-focus>
- General practitioners are also encouraged to focus on antimicrobial stewardship and are assisted through a toolkit "**TARGET**" (Treat Antibiotics Responsibly, Guidance, Education, Tools,) which is hosted on the Royal College of General Practitioners website at: <http://www.rcgp.org.uk/targetantibiotics/>

Animal keepers/Pet owners – additional messages

- Animal keepers and Pet owners: Bacteria, including those carrying antibiotic resistance, can be transferred between animals and humans and vice versa, therefore it is important to practice good hygiene measures to minimise this.
- Farmers and Livestock keepers: Prevent diseases by implementing good herd or flock health and bio-security practices, good nutrition, hygiene and animal welfare.



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- Follow the advice given by your vet and use any antibiotics prescribed by your vet in accordance with their labelling instructions. Complete the full course prescribed and observe any withdrawal period.
- Your vet may not necessarily prescribe newer antibiotics available as older classes of these medicines may be just as effective in treating your animal(s) and may reduce the development of resistance.

Veterinary Prescriber – additional messages

- Use antibiotics responsibly.
- Wherever possible use antibiotics at an early stage, when clinical signs of bacterial disease are first diagnosed and become evident.
- Use a narrow spectrum antibiotics wherever possible.
- The product's Summary of Product Characteristics (SPC) or product literature instructions and contra-indications must be clearly understood and taken into account, especially when deciding on the dosage and duration of treatment. Do follow the storage advice.
- Emphasise to clients the need to follow the antibiotic product's labelling instructions.
- Perform sensitivity testing on causal bacteria against antibiotics of choice where possible and particularly prior to treatment with broad spectrum and/or antibiotics considered critically important.
- If a treatment does not appear to work, perform further diagnostic tests and report the treatment failure using a yellow form (available from: www.vmd.defra.gov.uk), as a Suspected Lack of Efficacy, to the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD). This is a valuable tool for veterinarians to be part of an alert system to bring an emerging resistance problem to the attention of interested parties.