

FECAVA Advice to Companion Animal Owners on Responsible Use of Antibiotics and Infection Control



Inappropriate use of antibiotics (antimicrobials) could harm your pet, you and your family and is a threat to global health. Everyone needs to use antibiotics in a responsible manner, including you as an animal owner.

ANTIBIOTICS ARE IMPORTANT

Many infections cannot be managed without antibiotics, however resistance towards these is a growing public health issue. Owners and veterinarians need to work together to solve this.

ARE ANTIBIOTICS REALLY NECESSARY?

- Not all infections are caused by organisms sensitive to antibiotics, e.g. many are viral and do not respond to antibiotics. Also, not all bacterial infections require antibiotic therapy.
- Many wound and skin infections can be resolved by local wound care and topical antibacterial washes. Ask your veterinarian to learn more about this.

DIAGNOSTICS ARE IMPORTANT

To investigate if a bacterial infection is the cause of your animal's illness, the veterinarian might need to collect samples to look for signs of infection or to identify the specific pathogen involved through bacterial culture. Supporting This helps the veterinarian identify the best form of therapy and increase the chance of your animal's recovery without unnecessary risks (e.g. treatment failure).

DON'T EXPECT ANTIBIOTICS

Do not demand antibiotics if your veterinarian does not prescribe them; in most cases it is not appropriate to use antibiotics in a precautionary manner. Unless your animal is seriously ill and is admitted to an animal hospital for care, always ask your veterinarian if the prescribed antibiotics are really necessary, or if something else could be tried first.

ALWAYS FOLLOW YOUR VETERINARIAN'S ADVICE

- Give the antibiotics as instructed. Contact your veterinarian if the treatment is not effective within the recommended period.
- Do not change dosage or stop therapy in advance without consulting your veterinarian and keep your follow up appointments.
- Do not share antibiotics with other animals or animal owners.
- Never use left over medicines.
- Do not take animal medicines yourself.

HANDLE YOUR ANIMAL IN A CLEAN WAY

Always use gloves and disinfect your hands before and after attending to wounds or cleaning ears of animals.

KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT

If your veterinarian is aware of the correct protocols for hygiene and infection control, he/she will wear a shortsleeved shirt or coat to enable proper disinfection of hands between patients. This applies to all health care professionals.

- No rings, wristwatches or jewellery should be worn.
- Hands should be clean and disinfected before handling your animal.
- Gloves should be worn when handling infected tissue or wounds.

This poster has been made by the Federation of European Companion Animal Veterinary Associations (FECAVA) in collaboration with the Bella Moss Foundation.