European Antibiotic Awareness Day (EAAD) Key Messages

Subgroup asked to COMMENT and ENDORSE key messages and in particular to comment on proposed changed by some members to change language from bacteria to microbes.
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
- Individuals (the public, healthcare professionals and leaders) can take action by becoming an Antibiotic Guardian

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 Department of Health published the UK Five-Year Antimicrobial Resistance Strategy (AMR) in 2013. The overarching goal is to slow the development and spread of AMR by: improving the knowledge and understanding of AMR; conservation and stewardship of the effectiveness of existing treatments; stimulating the development of new antibiotics, diagnostics and novel therapies
- 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
- Public Health England (PHE) is responsible for coordinating the EAAD activities in England and is working with Department of Health’s Expert Advisory
Committee on Antimicrobial Resistance and Healthcare Associated Infections (ARHAI); the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), the devolved administrations and professional bodies/organisations towards the “One Health” initiative.

- An integrated ‘One Health’ approach strategy 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.

EAAD 18 November 2014

- 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.
- For 2014, an antibiotic guardian pledge campaign has been developed.
- The Antibiotic Guardian\(^1\) pledge campaign will act as a driver to increase engagement and provide an outcome measure. A pledge system will help people feel that they have taken concrete personal and collective action to help keep antibiotics active. This may in turn act as a catalyst for behaviour change that is measured through follow up. Our main objective is that by 30th November we have a combined 10,000 Antibiotic Guardian pledges from healthcare professionals and the public to at least action focused pledge for prudent use of antimicrobials.
- GPs continue to be encouraged to only prescribe antibiotics when they are needed for bacterial infections, 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 TARGET antibiotic toolkit which includes a patient information leaflet to assist primary care prescribers.
- Public Health England is developing a public facing video with a presenter highlighting the antibiotic resistance issue and calling on the public to become antibiotic guardians through three key steps:
  - Step 1: To consider alternatives to antibiotics and to ask a pharmacist about over the counter remedies that can help in the first instance.
  - Step 2: To follow the instructions and never share antibiotics.
  - Step 3: To spread the word and share the video.
- Department of Health small video clips are also 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.

\(^1\) [http://www.antibioticguardian.com](http://www.antibioticguardian.com)
1. Public Health England has also published a range of materials on its website for use and local adaptation to help support EAAD activities and initiatives.
2. EAAD was initiated by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) in 2008 and is held on 18 November every year.
3. EAAD coincides with the US Antibiotics Awareness Week, and similar programmes in Australia and Canada.
4. Defra and a number of Veterinary Bodies are raising awareness of EAAD 2014 through various activities to further promote responsible use of antibiotics by veterinarians, farmers and pet owners (animal keepers).

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2 https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-of-health/series/european-antibiotic-awareness-day-resources
Additional messages

Patients

- Antibiotic resistance is a threat to your health
- Good hygiene measures are essential in reducing the risk of spread of infections and is especially important in households with individuals who have chronic illnesses
- Antibiotics do not work for ALL colds, or for most coughs, sore throats or earache

The table below is an excerpt the TARGET Antibiotic Toolkit “Guide to treat your infection” and 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Illness</th>
<th>Lasts on average</th>
<th>What you can do to ease the symptoms</th>
<th>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)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ear infection</td>
<td>4 days</td>
<td>• have plenty of rest</td>
<td>• if you develop a severe headache and are vomiting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sore throat</td>
<td>7 days</td>
<td>• drink enough fluids to avoid feeling thirsty</td>
<td>• if your skin is very cold or has a strange colour, or you develop an unusual rash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common cold</td>
<td>10 days</td>
<td>• ask your local pharmacist to recommend medicines and over the counter remedies to help treat your symptoms such as bringing down your temperature or pain control (or both)</td>
<td>• if you feel confused or have slurred speech or are very drowsy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sinusitis</td>
<td>18 days</td>
<td>• other things you can do suggested by a GP or nurse</td>
<td>• if you have difficulty breathing. signs that suggest breathing problems can include:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cough or bronchitis</td>
<td>21 days</td>
<td></td>
<td>• breathing quickly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• turning blue around the lips and the skin below the mouth</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• skin between or above the ribs getting sucked or pulled in with every breath</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• if you develop chest pain</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• if you have difficulty swallowing or are drooling</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• if you cough up blood</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• if you are feeling a lot worse</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• 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
• 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
• Antibiotic resistant bacteria don’t just affect you, they can spread to other people (and animals) in close contact with you and are very difficult to treat

Prescriber

• 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. Discussing information on the guide to infection leaflet can facilitate this.
• 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

- 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
- 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

- 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 antibiotic sensitivity testing on causal bacteria against the 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