Canadian Animal Health Surveillance System CAHSS

Keeping You and Your Pets Healthy



What is AMU and AMR?

AMU (Antimicrobial Use) refers to the use of medicines to prevent or treat infections caused by microorganisms (bacteria, viruses, fungi, parasites). Antibiotics are a type of antimicrobial used specifically to treat bacterial infections.

AMR (Antimicrobial Resistance) occurs when microorganisms, such as bacteria, develop the ability to survive medicines that would normally kill them or stop their growth. This can make infections harder to treat in both animals and humans.

What is One Health?

One Health recognizes that the health of people, animals and the environment is interconnected. Resistant bacteria can spread between pets, people and their shared environments, making responsible antibiotic use important for everyone's health.

What contributes to AMR?

Unnecessary antibiotic use: Using antibiotics when they are not needed can contribute to the development and spread of resistant bacteria.

Improper antibiotic use: Sharing medications, using leftover antibiotics, or not following prescribed instructions can lead to ineffective treatment.

Spread of resistant bacteria: Resistant bacteria can move between pets, people, and their surroundings through direct contact and contaminated surfaces.

Poor infection prevention: Inadequate hygiene and preventive care can increase infections and the need for antibiotic treatment.

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A Pet Owner's Checklist:

- Only use prescribed antibiotics. Never give your pet antibiotics without veterinary guidance.
- Follow instructions carefully. Give the correct dose for the prescribed duration.
- Never share or reuse medications. Antibiotics prescribed for people or other pets may be inappropriate or unsafe.
- Ask questions. Talk to your veterinarian about whether antibiotics are necessary or if other treatments are appropriate.
- Dispose of unused medications safely. Use a pharmacy or approved medication take-back program.



Preventing AMR Starts at Home

Everyday actions can help prevent infections, reduce the need for antibiotics, and protect the health of pets, people, and the environment.

Why Should Pet Owners Care? Think One Health!

Pets and people share more than their homes. They can also share bacteria, including those resistant to antibiotics.

Antibiotic resistance can:

- Make bacterial infections in pets and people harder to treat.
- Limit effective treatment options.
- Spread through close contact, contaminated surfaces, and shared environments.

Prevent Infections Before They Start!

Practice Good Hygiene

- Wash hands after handling pets, pet waste, or cleaning their living spaces.
- Regularly clean bedding, toys, food bowls, and shared surfaces.
- Dispose of pet waste properly to limit environmental contamination.
- Clean and cover wounds to reduce the risk of infection.

Prioritize Preventive Care

- Stay up to date on vaccinations, veterinary check-ups, and parasite prevention.
- Maintain good nutrition and grooming practices.
- Address health concerns early before they become more serious.





For more information on antibiotic use and resistance, visit:
Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA) and
Canadian Animal Health Surveillance System (CAHSS)