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WORLD ANTIMICROBIAL AWARENESS 2020

How you take your prescription drugs could be increasing the risk of drug resistance

Do you sometimes take antibiotics over the counter that are not prescribed or demand a prescription from the medical officer when he/she says you don't need it? Or maybe you stop taking medicine as soon as you feel better? Improper use of prescription drugs contributes to drug resistance.

What is drug resistance or also known as antimicrobial resistance? ⁽¹⁾

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) occurs when bacteria, viruses, fungi, and parasites resist the effects of medications, making common infections harder to treat and increasing the risk of disease spread, severe illness, and death.

The antimicrobials are agents like antibiotic, antiviral, antifungal and antiprotozoal medicines that are critical tools for fighting diseases in humans, animals and plants. Many factors have accelerated the threat of AMR worldwide—including overuse and misuse of medicines in humans, livestock and agriculture, as well as poor access to clean water, sanitation and hygiene.

Antibiotic resistance for example is rising to dangerously high levels in all parts of the world. New resistance mechanisms are emerging and spreading globally, threatening our ability to treat common infectious diseases. Where antibiotics can be bought for human or animal use without a prescription, the emergence and spread of resistance is made worse. Without urgent action, we are heading for a post-antibiotic era, in which common infections and minor injuries can once again kill.

This year, the World Antimicrobials Awareness Week (18th – 24th Nov, 2020) through the theme - ***United to preserve antimicrobials*** seeks to encourage careful use of antimicrobials.

Why is this information important to me? ^(2,3)

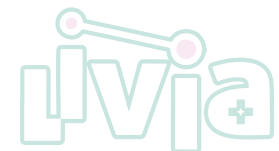
Take antibiotics as an example.

- A growing number of infections – such as pneumonia, tuberculosis, and blood poisoning – are becoming harder to treat as the antibiotics used to treat them become less effective.
- People are unable to recover from infections and may then spread those infections to others.
- Antibiotic resistance can affect anyone, of any age, in any country.
- Antibiotic resistance occurs naturally, but misuse of antibiotics in humans and animals is accelerating the process.
- When infections can no longer be treated by first-line antibiotics, more expensive medicines must be used making overall cost of healthcare higher for families.
- Antibiotic resistance leads to longer hospital stays, higher medical costs and increased mortality.

Ultimately, antibiotic resistance is putting the achievements of modern medicine at risk. Diabetes management, organ transplantations, chemotherapy and surgeries such as caesarean sections can become much more dangerous without effective antibiotics for the prevention and treatment of infections ⁽⁴⁾.

So how can I play my part in reducing antimicrobial resistance? ^(5,6)

- **Wash Your Hands regularly -**
Just like we have learned through Covid-19 this year, our bodies are constantly exposed to millions of germs so regular hand washing can help fight germs and prevent illness.
- **Learn the Right Ways to Use Antibiotics or other antimicrobials -**
 - Not all infections need antibiotics or other medicines.
 - Work with your healthcare professional to make sure you are getting the right antibiotic, at the right dosage, for the right amount of time.



-Never demand antibiotics if your healthcare professional says they are unnecessary.

- **Never Share or Use Leftover Antibiotics**
- **Prepare Food Safely to avoid contamination with bacteria.**
The World Health Organization (WHO) Five Keys to Safer Food (7) (keep clean, separate raw and cooked, cook thoroughly, keep food at safe temperatures, use safe water and raw materials).
- **Get Vaccinated -**
Getting the right vaccines and keeping up to date on all immunizations can help prevent illness.



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A graphic consisting of a white line connecting two pink circles, positioned above the word 'Livia'.

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