



# UNDERSTANDING ANTIBIOTICS



A GUIDE TO THE  
CORRECT USE OF ANTIBIOTICS  
WITH YOUR PET



## ANTIBIOTIC RESISTANCE



Antibiotic resistance is where the bacteria causing infections are no longer killed by the antibiotic(s) being used to treat that infection. This is an increasingly serious issue in both human and animal health. It's important that you and your vet help by taking steps to minimise the development of bacterial resistance. The best way of doing this is to follow the instructions in this leaflet and given to you by your vet.



The Bella Moss Foundation aims to achieve a world where antibiotic resistance in bacteria is a rarity. To do so the Foundation provides education and information for veterinary professionals, those who work with animals and the general public. Please see [www.thebellamosfoundation.com](http://www.thebellamosfoundation.com)

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Stick prescription label here.

Medication record. Pets name: ..... Today's date: .....

	DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3	DAY 4	DAY 5	DAY 6	DAY 7
WEEK 1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
WEEK 2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
WEEK 3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
WEEK 4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Tick box when medicine is given, tick multiple times if required.

- Some people are allergic to antibiotics so it is worth considering wearing gloves while handling medication and always advisable to thoroughly wash hands afterwards.
- Use this chart to make sure anyone involved in medicating your pet fully understands what to do and when.



## WHAT ARE ANTIBIOTICS?

Antibiotics are vitally important and often life-saving drugs that are used in both animals and humans to treat, or in some cases prevent, infections caused by bacteria. Different types of antibiotic are required for different types of bacterial infection, so only ever use what has been prescribed on this occasion for the specific condition that is being treated.



## WHEN ARE THEY USED?

Not all infections need antibiotics – sometimes an alternative treatment such as a cream, shampoos or special dietary support is sufficient. If an infection is not caused by bacteria, but by viruses or fungi then antibiotics are ineffective.

Using antibiotics unnecessarily could be harmful to your pet and could contribute to the generation of antibiotic resistance with the result that the antibiotics may not work when needed.

## FINISHING THE COURSE

Your pet should start to feel better after a few days. However for them to make a complete recovery, and to minimise the risk of antibiotic resistance, it's vital that the entire course of antibiotics is given. If after a few days of starting the medication you are not seeing any improvement it's very important to contact your vet for further advice.

Do not change the dose, frequency or duration of treatment without speaking to your vet. Please speak to your vet if you have any problems giving the medication - antibiotics are available in many forms to help ease administration.

Even if you feel your pet is fully fit and active you must still attend any follow up consultations. Your vet may pick up that the infection has not completely resolved and may prescribe a longer course of treatment.

## POSSIBLE SIDE-EFFECTS

Most antibiotics used in dogs and cats are well tolerated. However, on occasion, side-effects can occur.

The most common side-effects, similar to those in people, are vomiting or diarrhoea. In addition to being uncomfortable for your pet, this can reduce how much of the antibiotic they manage to absorb into their body and this may reduce their effectiveness.

If you notice any potential side-effects that concern you contact your vet for advice.

## TOP TIPS FOR ADMINISTRATION

- To give an antibiotic the best chance of fighting infection think of ways to remind yourself to medicate your pet at the recommended times. You can use this handy reminder on your fridge or noticeboard and perhaps also set a reminder on your mobile phone or pop a sticky note on top of your pet's food packaging.
- Follow any specific instructions given to you by your vet (such as giving the medication with or without food) and carefully read what is written on your prescribed antibiotics.
- Give the correct dose as instructed and make sure your pet has actually swallowed any oral medication – it's amazing what ingenious tricks they can perform to wrongly convince you they have eaten them.
- If you are having difficulty administering medicines to your pet try using a small quantity of food (if permitted by your vet), or speak to your vet about alternative options.
- Try to give medication at the same time every day evenly spaced out. Ideally this is 12 hours apart if given twice daily and 8 hours apart if given three times daily.
- If you have missed a dose don't be tempted to double up the next one unless you have discussed this with your vet. Never give more than the prescribed dose unless told to do so.