

24th October 2017

Dear colleague,

Can you help us promote important information about antibiotics?

I am writing to request your support in helping us to raise public awareness about the dangers of over-using antibiotics.

At Leicester City Clinical Commissioning Group, we are supporting Public Health England's national campaign to help people understand the role of antibiotics and for which conditions they are necessary. We want to reduce inappropriate prescriptions for antibiotics and encourage health professionals and the public to take action to halt their over-use.

In Leicester, we are launching our campaign during the week leading up to November 18th, which is European Antibiotic Awareness Day.

Why is the over-use of antibiotics a problem?

Antibiotics are essential to treat serious bacterial infections, such as meningitis, pneumonia and sepsis, but they are frequently being used where not necessary, to treat illnesses such as coughs, colds and sore throats, that can get better by themselves.

Taking antibiotics encourages harmful bacteria that live inside you to become resistant. If you take antibiotics, when you don't need them, the next time you get an infection it is more likely that antibiotics will not work, making it harder to treat.

It is estimated that at least 5,000 deaths are caused every year in England because antibiotics no longer work for some infections. Experts predict that in just over 30 years antibiotic resistance will kill more people worldwide than cancer and diabetes combined.

Common conditions like kidney infections and pneumonia have started to become untreatable. Without urgent action from us all common infections, minor injuries and routine operations will become far riskier. You can read more about this issue [here](#).

What can be done about it?

By only using antibiotics when it's appropriate to do so, we can slow down resistance and make sure these life-saving medicines remain effective when we need them the most.

In Leicester we have been working hard to reduce the number of inappropriate prescriptions for antibiotics. Each GP practice has a nominated Antibiotic Guardian, whose responsibility is to oversee that antibiotics are prescribed in the most effective way for patients and we have succeeded in reducing the rates of antibiotic use.



How the public can help

But we also need the public's help in this. Antibiotics are often inappropriately prescribed when patients expect or demand them from their GP, without really understanding whether they will be effective for their illness.

How you can help

We would really appreciate your help in publicising this campaign among people you have contact with and/or those who use your services.

We would like to promote the following messages:

- First seek pharmacist advice around reducing your symptoms through actions you can take yourself and over the counter medicines
- Please do not put pressure on your GP to prescribe antibiotics for a common cold, sore throat or viral infection in the winter; allow them to make the decision as to what treatment is best for your condition
- If you are prescribed antibiotics, take them exactly as described, never save them for later and never share them with others.
- Spread the word – tell family and friends about antibiotic resistance.
- Tweet and share #AntibioticGuardian

Campaign resources

You can order a range of **free posters and leaflets** directly from Public Health England, contained in their Partner Pack for the antibiotics campaign.

To see details of their Partner Pack [click here](#) or type this address into your web browser:

<https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/resources/campaigns/58/resources/2408>

Please note: Before you can order this pack, you will need to register with Public Health England's resource centre. This simply requires your name, organisation, job title and email address.

Please click to [register](#).

An article for your newsletter?

If you produce a newsletter, or any other kind of communication, and you would like us to send you a short article to include, please contact us.

If you decide to support our campaign, please let us know. We are keen to find out which individuals and organisations are helping us to reduce the over-use of antibiotics.

Many thanks in anticipation of your support.

Kind regards,

Dr Paul Danaher
GP and Prescribing Lead
Leicester City Clinical Commissioning Group