



PRESS RELEASE

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Public Health Campaign on the misuse of Antibiotics

A campaign, led by the Gibraltar Health Authority (GHA), with Public Health Gibraltar on 'Antimicrobial Resistance', was launched on Tuesday 19th February 2019.

Antibiotic or antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is one of the biggest global health challenges of this century. Twenty five million people die across Europe each year, due to infections resistant to antibiotics. Antibiotic resistance occurs when bacteria develop the ability to defeat the drugs designed to kill them. This can lead to more deaths and more complications for people receiving lifesaving surgeries that includes organ transplantations, chemotherapy and surgeries, such as caesarean sections.

Antibiotics are a vital tool used to manage infections. They are critical to both prevent and treat infections in patients, but they are frequently being used to treat illnesses such as coughs, earache and sore throats that can get better by themselves.

The misuse of antibiotics is one of the key contributors to antibiotic resistance and this occurs when:

- Antibiotics are prescribed/taken unnecessarily.
- Antibiotic administration is delayed in critically ill patients.
- The dose and/or the duration of antibiotic treatment is inappropriate.

Director of Public Health, Dr Sohail Bhatti said, "No amount of antibiotics will cure a cold. Viral infections generally get better as your body can usually fight these on its own. Antibiotics don't work on viruses. It is important to never demand antibiotics from your GP, as you may not need them. Antibiotics are some of our most precious medicines and taking antibiotics when you do not need them speeds up antibiotic resistance. We will soon get to a situation where someone with a minor injury could die, because the antibiotics we chose did not work because of their resistance. We have to tackle this problem now, before it gets worse".

Ministry of Health, Care and Justice



The Minister for Health, Care and Justice, the Honourable Mr Neil F Costa MP added: “Members in our community may not be aware of antimicrobial resistance and what it means for them. This is why the GHA and our colleagues at Public Health Gibraltar have instigated the campaign, which will aim at alerting and informing the general public on the personal risk of inappropriate use of antibiotics. To tackle the misuse of antibiotics, and safeguard against the real dangers of AMR, I will explore different options, including legal measures, to stop the unsafe misuse of antibiotics. I would like to sincerely thank Dr Bhatti and his fantastic team for working tirelessly on this very important campaign.”

Further information on Antimicrobial Resistance may be obtained via the links below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h4iCBYmpJTE&feature=youtu.be>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iuLsLTCGbKo&feature=youtu.be>