

# New resources to address antibiotic resistance are just a click away

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## Abstract

Antibiotic resistance is a complex issue with multiple causes, and there are many roles to play in addressing it. As part of its response, the Public Health Agency of Canada is launching a pilot antibiotic awareness campaign for Canadian families and health care professionals. Coinciding with Antibiotic Awareness Week, starting on November 17, 2014, the goal of this campaign is to improve knowledge and awareness of antibiotic resistance in Canada. To achieve this, the Agency has developed a suite of resources for both Canadian families and health care providers featuring a variety of key messages explaining antibiotic resistance, why it is important, and how to reduce the risks associated with it. Resources for Canadian families include an online informational video, an educational brochure, and infographics for both adults and children. Resources for health care professionals include two online Continuing Medical Education Modules, a letter that physicians can sign and provide to parents explaining why an antibiotic was not prescribed, and two webinars to present trends in antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and antimicrobial use. Health professionals will also receive an electronic postcard and a bilingual campaign poster. Promoting the campaign messages and using these campaign resources will support health professionals in discussions about antibiotic resistance with their patients or clients, and in their continuing efforts to be part of the solution in addressing this important global health challenge.

## Introduction

Antibiotic resistance is a growing health concern around the world that threatens our ability to effectively treat many illnesses and infections (1). This is a complex issue with multiple causes, and there are many roles to play in addressing it. The Public Health Agency of Canada (the Agency) leads the Government of Canada's response to the issue of antibiotic resistance in Canada. Part of this response includes the development and launch of a pilot antibiotic awareness campaign for Canadian families and health care professionals. The launch of the Agency's pilot awareness campaign will coincide with Antibiotic Awareness Week, which takes place November 17–23, 2014. Antibiotic Awareness Week is recognized in Canada and internationally. The purpose of this article is to brief health care professionals about the Agency's campaign and associated resources.

## Goal, key messages and resources

The objective of this campaign is to improve knowledge and awareness of antibiotic resistance in Canada through the promotion of responsible antibiotic use and good infection prevention behaviours. To support this goal, the Agency will be promoting several key health promotion messages to Canadians that explain what antibiotic resistance is, why it is important, and how to reduce the risks associated with it. Key messages include:

- Antibiotic resistance is a public health concern.
- Sometimes no prescription is the right prescription.

- There are easy steps that can be taken to reduce the risk of getting an antibiotic resistant infection.
- Always use antibiotics as directed.

To achieve its objective, the Agency has developed a suite of resources to address antibiotic resistance, intended for both Canadian families and health care providers (2). Resources for Canadian families include: an online informational video; an educational brochure—*Antibiotic Resistance: Questions & Answers*; two infographics for adults—*Antibiotic Resistance: Facts and Figures*, and *Help Reduce Antibiotic Resistance*; as well as an infographic for children aged 8–12 entitled *Germs & Antibiotics*.

Resources for health care professionals include two online Continuing Medical Education Modules: one on antimicrobial resistance (AMR) in general, and another specifically on AMR and gonorrhea. As they become available, these modules can be accessed on the Government of Canada's Shared Services e-learning website as well as on the websites of various health professional associations. Resources will also include, for example, a letter that physicians can sign and provide to parents explaining why an antibiotic was not prescribed for their child; this is designed to further assist with the education of the general public on this important public health issue. In addition, two webinars are planned for November 2014 to launch the campaign and to present findings from the Agency's surveillance programs on Canadian trends in antimicrobial resistance and antimicrobial use (see index page).

In the coming weeks, health professionals will receive an electronic postcard from Dr. Howard Njoo, Director General of the Agency's Centre for Communicable Diseases and Infection Control, with links to these campaign resources on antibiotic resistance. Canadian family physicians, general practitioners, and pediatricians, will also receive bilingual print copies of the campaign poster and of the education brochure that can be used to help inform patients; Canadian pharmacies will receive print copies of the education brochure.

## Conclusion

Canada has already seen positive changes in prescribing practices aimed at curbing antimicrobial resistance (3). To further support your efforts, the Agency encourages you to visit the [Government of Canada antibiotic resistance website](#) to learn more about antibiotic use and resistance in Canada and to access our resources (2). Promoting the campaign messages and using these campaign resources will support your discussions about antibiotic resistance with your patients or clients, and in continuing your efforts to be part of the solution in addressing this global health challenge.

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## Conflict of interest

None.

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## References

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