**Prescribing Tip for information**

**World Antimicrobial Resistance Awareness Week 18th – 24th November 2023**



**This week, 18th – 24th November 2023 marks the launch of the 2023 World Antimicrobial Resistance Awareness Week (WAAW). This annual campaign, led by the World Health Organisation (WHO), aims to increase awareness of global antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and to encourage best practices among the general public, health workers and policy makers to avoid the further emergence and spread of drug-resistant infections. The WHO’s 2023 campaign theme for WAAW is ‘Preventing antimicrobial resistance together’, highlighting that fighting AMR is a global endeavour.**

In primary care, the **Northwest region has the second highest volume of antibiotic prescribing** compared to all other regions in England. In Lancashire and South Cumbria ICB, the volume of antibiotic prescribing over the past 12 months was higher than previous 12months. (data source: epact2 dashboard)

**Antimicrobial Stewardship Messages for Healthcare Professionals:**

* **Ensure treatment is in line with antimicrobial prescribing guidelines:** [**NICE/UKHSA Antimicrobial Prescribing Guidance for Managing Common Infections**](https://www.bnf.org/news/2021/07/29/bnf-hosts-antimicrobial-summary-guidance-on-behalf-of-nice-and-phe/)**.**
* As the COVID-19 pandemic and recent outbreaks have highlighted, management of viral infection remains an important challenge for healthcare professionals and can have an adverse impact on the use of antibiotics. (1)
* To avoid inappropriate antibiotic prescribing in the context of COVID and other viral infections, it is recommended to follow [current NICE guidelines](https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng191) to infer if pneumonia has a COVID, viral or bacterial cause. Treat coughs, fever and breathlessness related to COVID in line with [clinical guidance](https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng191), not with antibiotics – please consider appropriate pathways for diagnosis, testing and clinical management (1)
* Explain to patients that antibiotics do not prevent or treat viral infections – antibiotics can cause side-effects, including nausea and diarrhoea; their use can also increase the risk of spreading infections that are caused by bacteria resistant to antibiotics. (1)
* Encourage patients, relatives or carers to return [unwanted](https://www.sps.nhs.uk/articles/managing-pharmaceutical-waste/) oral and topical antimicrobial medication to a community pharmacy in the original packaging for safe disposal and NOT to throw them in the bin, flush them down the toilet OR share with others.

**For information about WAAW resources see:**  [**WHO World AMR Awareness Week 2023**](https://www.who.int/news-room/events/detail/2023/11/18/default-calendar/world-amr-awareness-week-2023) **including the WAAW global colour campaign: Go Blue for AMR and** [**UKHSA AMR awareness toolkit**](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/european-antibiotic-awareness-day-resources-toolkit-for-healthcare-professionals-in-england)

# **References**:

# UKHSA. Antimicrobial resistance awareness: toolkit for healthcare providers. 12th October 2023