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Antibiotic Amnesty 2024 – client information

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is an increasing problem worldwide, affecting both human and animal health.

But what is AMR?

Antibiotics are essential when treating many conditions in animals and people, but bacteria are becoming resistant to many antibiotics that we use in human and veterinary medicine.

Antibiotic resistance occurs when bacteria develop defences that protect them from antibiotic medications, making treatment less effective.

An Antibiotics Amnesty is running throughout November 2024 to encourage clients to return unused and out-of-date antibiotic medications prescribed for your pets to your local veterinary practice.

This will allow correct and safe disposal of the antibiotic medications, which will avoid **contamination of the environment** and **help prevent antimicrobial resistance due to inappropriate disposal**.

Returning unused or out of date antibiotics will also help stop inappropriate antibiotic use.

To find out more about the campaign visit:

www.rumacae.org.uk/vet-antibioticamnesty/

Important facts:

Antimicrobial resistance is a world-wide health threat

- Antimicrobial resistance occurs when bacteria develop mechanisms that protect them from the effects of antibiotic treatments, making treatment for people and animals less effective
- Bacteria are becoming resistant to many antibiotics that we use in human and veterinary medicine
- The environment is at risk if antibiotics aren't disposed of properly. If antibiotics are disposed of inappropriately e.g. via household waste, this can contribute to antimicrobial resistance in the environment

You can play a part in keeping antibiotics working

Antibiotics are an essential treatment for many conditions in humans and in animals; we must use antibiotics carefully to keep them working when we need them:

- You should never give your pet left-over or out of date antibiotics. Using antibiotics when not needed could risk side effects, delay an accurate diagnosis for your pet, and contribute to antimicrobial resistance
- Antibiotics should be disposed of safely. Inappropriate disposal of unused antibiotics could contribute to antimicrobial resistance and pollute the environment through waterways, affecting our wildlife

How can you help?

- Throughout November 2024, veterinary practices across the UK are holding an Antibiotic Amnesty where you can return any unused or partially used (extra or out of date) antibiotic medications to your veterinary practice for safe disposal
- Speak to your vet practice about the campaign and ask how you can get involved. There are many ways you can be part of the campaign e.g. spread the word by posting details of the amnesty on social channels (you can re-share practice posts) or even just by talking to pet owners you know to raise awareness of the campaign
- If you return your antibiotics, share your story and use the hashtag #AntibioticsAmnesty to further raise awareness