

Brought to you by RESPONSIBLE USE OF MEDICINES ALLIANCE RUMA COMPANION ANIMAL & EQUINE

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Animal Medicines Amnesty

The Animal Medicines Amnesty (formerly known as the Antibiotic Amnesty) is a **One-Health** initiative involving veterinary teams right across the UK. The aim is simple – to encourage owners to return out-of-date or leftover pet medicines to veterinary practices for safe disposal. This helps to avoid inappropriate use of these medicines by owners and helps prevent inappropriate disposal which can contaminate the environment. Safe use and disposal can also help prevent resistance from developing e.g. AMR and parasiticide resistance. Previously, this campaign was focused only on antibiotics but the campaign has now evolved to encourage owners to return **any** unused or out-of-date veterinary medicines.

Working together, the veterinary community can help recover unused and out-of-date veterinary medicines from pet owners right across the UK. The Animal Medicines Amnesty is an opportunity for all members of the veterinary team to raise awareness about the safe use and disposal of **ALL** veterinary medicines and is a great way to have conversations about medicines stewardship (e.g. antibiotic stewardship / the safe use of parasiticides) and contribute positively to the responsible use of veterinary medicines to safeguard the wellbeing of people, pets and the environment.

Why take part in The Animal Medicines Amnesty?

This campaign helps educate owners about the responsible use and disposal of veterinary medicines and maintain the efficacy of them. Some examples are below:

Antibiotics

- Antibiotics are a vital treatment for the management of bacterial disease and a proven life saver, but it is critical to use antibiotics rationally and only when needed, so that they remain effective for the future.
- We want unused antibiotics to be disposed of safely:
    a. Studies show that leftover antibiotics are rarely returned to pharmacies/vets and are more commonly disposed of in household waste or down sinks/toilets.
        i. Antibiotic residues have been detected in rivers around the world
            1. Potentially contributing to AMR
            2. Negative impact on water quality, aquatic life and wildlife
        ii. The Animal Medicines Amnesty provides a great opportunity to educate owners about AMR and will allow appropriate disposal and therefore help limit environmental pollution
    b. Use of leftover or expired antibiotics could risk adverse effects and increase the risk of AMR if used for the wrong indication, and could delay a diagnosis
        i. The Animal Medicines Amnesty aims to reduce the harm from inappropriate use by encouraging veterinary practices to educate owners

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Parasiticides

Parasiticides treatments for pets are important, but so too is safe use and disposal of these medications. Of key importance is prescribing in a way that balances the risk to an individual animal's health and welfare, against the risk to future population health and welfare, the environment, and human health. The Animal Medicines Amnesty provides a great opportunity to talk to clients about the following areas:

- **Only treating pets when necessary**: based on lifestyle, infestation risk, and the prevalence of specific parasites in the local area, rather than applying this type of medication routinely
- **Safe application and disposal**: It is important that owners apply spot on treatments safely, doing so indoors and avoiding bathing or letting pets swim afterwards to help prevent contaminating waterways
- **Disposal of packaging (vials, applicators) securely**—it is important that owners are advised **not** to wash or flush packaging down drains
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How to get involved in The Animal Medicines Amnesty



Starting 1st October: Preparing for the amnesty

- Order a spare pharmaceutical bin or get hold of something similar
- Put up posters about the campaign, post details on your practice's social media channels and communicate details in your practice newsletter – see QR code for all the resources you need to support this
- Communicate your plans to your colleagues in practice, explaining what the campaign is. For example you could arrange a short five minute team meeting and tell them what is going to happen in your practice
    - You may need to hold more than one such meeting to cover everyone in the practice and send a follow-up email to remind everyone of the activity and timings
    - Things to cover in practice email / meeting include why you are involved in this important campaign (don't assume people will know)

Think about how you will reach out to your client base (see later on for lots of ideas). You can start by putting posters up in waiting and consulting rooms (posters available to download via the QR code below which will take you to the campaign toolkit):

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Starting 1st November: Officially launch The Animal Medicines Amnesty in your practice

The Animal Medicines Amnesty has been designed to minimise impact on your daily workflow.

- Put the pharmaceutical bin in a secure location and label it with "Animal Medicines Amnesty".
- When clients return their unused veterinary medicines to a Vet, Nurse or Receptionist, the drugs should be put into the labelled pharmaceutical bin
- Ensure posters are visible and maintain visibility of the campaign across all communications channels

Methods of engaging clients might include any or all of the following. Client comms can start **during October through to the end of November**:

- Emailing or texting clients directly about the Animal Medicines Amnesty using the resources in the toolkit. For example, if a client has received antibiotics in the last six months there is a legitimate reason to contact them about the campaign – see separate documents in the campaign toolkit with pre-written emails practices can use/adapt for their client communications
- Client handouts - download the campaign handout provided in the campaign toolkit area and print it off to give out to clients. Copies could also be given to the veterinary pharmacy team to hand to clients
- Posters in waiting rooms – see downloads available in the campaign toolkit area
- Conversations in consulting rooms and in the veterinary pharmacies – see downloadable script to help aid client conversations
- Include details about The Animal Medicines Amnesty in your practice newsletter – see example wording in the campaign toolkit
- Download the social media graphics/posts provided in the toolkit and use these on practice social media channels and in newsletters or on waiting room screens
- Put stickers saying "Return Unused Drugs" on packets of tablets/prescription bags – download sticker designs from the toolkit area
- Modify any practice vaccination booster reminders to include a mention of this initiative –

use some of the pre-written messaging available in the toolkit area
- Create a waiting room display board about the campaign

<u>Ideas for veterinary practice team engagement in The Animal Medicines Amnesty</u>

- Run a competition in your practice to see who can drive the most returns of unused and out-of-date veterinary medicines
- Run a competition for the most inventive way to bring the campaign to life for clients
- For corporate vet organisations, you could run a competition for the most inventive waiting room display
- Ideally, for the campaign to work effectively, it would be helpful to appoint a practice Animal Medicines Amnesty Champion who can oversee the campaign throughout November and is happy to lead and champion all activity

N.B. If a client also returns medically prescribed antibiotics they should be directed to a community pharmacy).

Starting 1st December Auditing the impact of The Animal Medicines Amnesty:

Data collection from participating practices will help audit the impact of the amnesty and will help strengthen future campaigns:

- Count up the number of veterinary medicines returned during November: numbers of tablets, number of topical packs, number of injections, oral suspensions and the types of medicines. **DETAILS ABOUT HOW TO SUBMIT THIS INFORMATION WILL BE ISSUED IN DUE COURSE**
- Prizes will be available for those practices that secure the highest number of returned veterinary medicines and the practice with the most inventive client engagement activity