

PRESS RELEASE

The fight against antibiotic resistance Antibiotic Awareness Week highlights the risks

The global fight against antibiotic resistance is ramping up. The World Health Organization has launched an Antibiotic Awareness Week, which will be running for the first time in Switzerland from 13 to 19 November 2017. The professional world and wider public especially are to better communicate and understand that the severe consequences of antibiotic resistance are on the rise. Humans, animals, agriculture and the environment are affected in equal measure. Numerous associations and organisations across Switzerland are supporting the Awareness Week with their own activities and campaigns.

The number of cases of antibiotic resistance is increasing globally and with it the risk that infectious diseases will now be very difficult or impossible to treat, meaning humans and animals will die. Every year in Switzerland too, people and animals are infected with bacteria which antibiotics are powerless to treat. With its International Antibiotic Awareness Week, the WHO aims to raise public awareness about the issue. National Antibiotic Awareness Week in Switzerland (13 to 19 November 2017) will be an opportunity to learn more about and discuss the issue of antibiotic resistance together with people working in human medicine, veterinary medicine, agriculture and the environment.

Various events, publications and information days are planned. The week is being coordinated by the Swiss Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH), the Federal Food Safety and Veterinary Office (FSVO), the Federal Office for Agriculture (FOAG) and the Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN). Universities, experts, industry organisations, associations, research institutes, health centres, pharmacies, consumer associations and other interested parties will be taking part in the Antibiotic Awareness Week by running their own events and campaigns. Numerous activities and campaigns are already in the pipeline, including various symposia for doctors at universities and hospitals and talks for the general public, exhibitions and training sessions at colleges of agriculture and research institutes.



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In Bern, an open symposium by Public Health Schweiz is offering a broad overview of the current developments in antibiotic resistance, the dangers and risks involved and potential solutions. Special conferences, specialist events and information days will be held in addition to presentations and tours.

Strategy on Antibiotic Resistance (StAR)

One of the most significant advances in medicine, antibiotics allow us to treat dangerous diseases such as pneumonia or blood poisoning, which often used to prove fatal. However, the excessive and sometimes improper use of antibiotics has resulted in more and more bacteria becoming resistant to antibiotics. The consequences are dramatic and affect humans, animals, agriculture and the environment in equal measure. In response, the Swiss Federal Council concluded its national Strategy on Antibiotic Resistance (StaAR) in 2015 as a means of addressing the increasing level of resistance in a coordinated way.

Informing the professional world and the wider public is one of the key measures posed by the strategy. Two thirds of the 35 planned measures have already been initiated. Research is playing an important role: the launch of the “National Antimicrobial Resistance Research Programme NFP72” will enable gaps in knowledge to be closed and support to be provided for the strategy implementation. Since the issue of antibiotic resistance affects many areas, the four Federal Offices – the FOPH, FSVO, FOAG and FOEN – are working together on StAR with a “One Health” approach. The strategy consists of eight spheres of action: monitoring, prevention, proper usage of antibiotics, combating resistance, research and development, co-operation, information and education and framework conditions.

<https://www.star.admin.ch/star/en/home.html>

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