

# Antibiotics and Your Pets: What You Should Know

**TRUTH:** Antibiotic-resistant bacteria are a problem in pets.

- Antibiotics are routinely used to treat bacterial diseases.
- Antibiotic effectiveness is declining as bacteria develop resistance.
- A major driver of antibiotic resistance is the use of antibiotics when they are not needed.
- Bacterial culture and identification lab tests will help your veterinarian to treat your pet more quickly and effectively.

**TRUTH:** Viral infections do not respond to antibiotics.

- Just like in people, most “colds” are not caused by bacteria and will get better without antibiotics within 10 days.
- Talk to your veterinarian about other measures to improve your pet’s comfort.
- If your pet does not get better in 10 days or stops eating, a visit to your veterinarian is needed.

**TRUTH:** Cats do not commonly get urinary tract infections.

- Urinary tract infections are uncommon in cats and very rare in young male cats.
- If your cat is exhibiting inappropriate litter box behavior, ask your veterinarian to perform tests to determine the cause of the problem.

**TRUTH:** Dogs with diarrhea might not need antibiotics.

- Many times, mild to moderate diarrhea in dogs will resolve in three to five days without medications.
- Talk to your veterinarian about diet recommendations and to determine if and when medical intervention is needed.

**TRUTH:** Preventive care can help reduce the need for antibiotics in cats and dogs.

- Keeping up-to-date with your pet’s vaccines can help prevent infections that need to be treated with antibiotics.
- Monthly flea and tick preventatives can help keep your pet from getting bacterial infections that are spread by those vectors. These include the bacteria that cause Lyme disease.

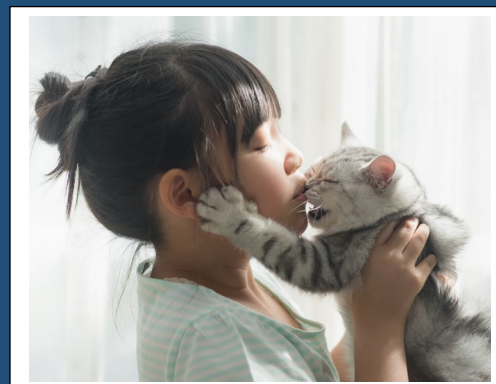
For more information, go to  
<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/antimicrobial-stewardship/index.htm>.

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## Did you know?

**Antibiotics can be life-saving, but all medications have potential side effects.** Talk to your veterinarian about the risks and benefits of giving your pet antibiotics.

**Pets and people can share more than hugs.** Once bacteria become resistant, they can spread in clinics and among pets and people in a home. Always wash your hands after handling pets and instruct young children to do the same.



## What can you do about antibiotic resistance?

Partner with your veterinarian to champion wise antibiotic use!

Ask your veterinarian when antibiotics are needed and when other options might be better.

Give medications as prescribed.

Ask about proper disposal of unused antibiotics.



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