

[DH and HKMA urge proper use of antibiotics in support of World Antimicrobial Resistance Awareness Week \(with photo\)](#)

The Department of Health (DH) today (November 17) held a joint press conference with the Hong Kong Medical Association (HKMA) to urge members of the public to use antibiotics properly in support of the World Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) Awareness Week starting tomorrow (November 18) to November 24 in order to participate in the fight against the threat of AMR.

The World Health Organization has declared AMR as one of the top 10 global public health threats facing humanity. "AMR is a situation when microorganisms evolve and become resistant to previously effective medications, with misuse and overuse of antimicrobials being the major factors in the development of drug-resistant pathogens. AMR causes a significant global burden on public health. Medical literature revealed that there were approximately 1.27 million deaths in 2019 worldwide attributed to AMR, while deaths attributable to AMR will be as high as 10 million in 2050 according to an estimation by an overseas study, which is even higher than the number of deaths caused by cancer," the Consultant (AMR) of the Infection Control Branch of the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the DH, Dr Edmond Ma, said at a press conference today.

Dr Ma introduced a number of resistant bacteria that present an urgent and serious threat to public health (including Carbapenemase-producing Enterobacterales and *Candida auris*). He quoted the report on [General Public's Knowledge, Attitude and Practice Survey on Antibiotic Resistance 2022](#) published by the CHP this April and again reminded the public on the risk of resistant bacteria and knowledge about the proper use of antibiotics. In addition, he alerted the public on the risk of AMR in food, as reflected by the rising trend of antibiotic-resistant bacteria detected in ready-to-eat (RTE) foods by surveillance data in recent years. Also attending the press conference, the President of the HKMA, Dr Cheng Chi-man, explained common conditions that may require/do not require antibiotics. Taking the opportunity, he also explained some common myths by the public on antibiotics, and called on healthcare professionals to work together with members of the public against AMR.

With a view to enhancing public knowledge on AMR, the DH launched a new government TV Announcement in the Public Interest themed as "[Use Antibiotics Properly, Always Consult a Doctor](#)" for this year's World AMR Awareness Week, on different platforms (including social media and public transportation) to encourage the public to take appropriate actions in combating the threat of AMR.

Members of the public are reminded to use antibiotics properly (e.g. not

to self-purchase antibiotics at community pharmacies without a prescription, not to request unnecessary antibiotics from doctors, and adhere to doctors' instructions when taking antibiotics). They are also urged to receive seasonal influenza and COVID-19 vaccines as effective means to prevent secondary bacterial infection, hence reducing the use of antibiotics and occurrence of AMR. They should be aware of the risk of AMR in food: cook food thoroughly before consumption; avoid raw or undercooked RTE foods if one belongs to high-risk groups (such as pregnant women, infants and young children, the elderly and people with weakened immunity); and observe good hygienic practices in the kitchen when handling food to minimise the risk of cross-contamination by resistant bacteria.

AMR is considered one of the greatest threats to global health and economies. The Government has all along attached great importance to tackling the issue of AMR. Relevant bureaux/departments and organisations, including the Health Bureau, the DH, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department and the Hospital Authority will continue to keep abreast of international and local developments and maintain close liaison with private hospitals, professional bodies, academia and other stakeholders to combat the challenge of AMR through cross-sector co-ordination and collaboration.

The CHP will continue to enhance the public education on appropriate use of antibiotics. For details of the survey report and other information about antimicrobial resistance, please visit the CHP [thematic website](#) and the CHP [Facebook Page](#).

