



ANTIBIOTIC AWARENESS DAY IN CANADA

New national awareness day promotes prudent antibiotic use to help fight antibiotic resistance – website launched at www.AntibioticAwareness.ca

November 17, 2010 – Antibiotic resistance is an issue health practitioners around the world face daily. Numerous health-related organizations have partnered to mark tomorrow as the first Canadian Antibiotic Awareness Day in an effort to promote prudent use of antibiotics and fight the threat of antibiotic-resistant bacteria.

The National Collaborating Centre for Infectious Diseases (NCCID) based in Winnipeg, the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), the Association of Medical Microbiology and Infectious Disease (AMMI) Canada, the Community and Hospital Infection Control Association (CHICA) Canada, the Canadian Foundation for Infectious Diseases (CFID), and the Canadian Paediatric Society (CPS) have joined to recognize Nov. 18, 2010, as Antibiotic Awareness Day in Canada.

“It is very exciting to see so many health partners join together to launch the first Antibiotic Awareness Day in Canada,” says Dr. David Butler-Jones, Canada’s Chief Public Health Officer. “Antibiotic resistance is a growing concern in Canada and around the world. Raising awareness and encouraging prudent use of antibiotics are vital steps in helping control the spread of antibiotic resistant infections.”

“Canadian Antibiotic Awareness Day will focus on the relationship between doctors and patients by offering printed and online information for practitioners, patients and parents, as well as webcasts presenting the latest data and information on antimicrobial resistance,” says Dr. Margaret Fast, Scientific Director of NCCID. “This campaign has the potential to improve public health in Canada because it offers practical tools focusing on the threat of antibiotic resistance.”

“Simply, antibiotic overuse drives resistance, which affects the whole community,” says Dr. Lynora Saxinger, Chair of the AMMI Canada Antimicrobial Stewardship and Resistance Committee. “Patients want to get better and their doctors want to do the right thing, but antibiotics are commonly seen as the safest choice for ‘colds and flu’ when in fact they won’t help these viral infections, and may cause side effects as well as bacterial resistance. We want to help put tools in the hands of doctors and patients to help in the decisions.”

Antibiotic Awareness Day resources include a “prescription pad” for doctors to give directly to patients seeking antibiotics. All of the resources are available on the new Antibiotic Awareness Day website at www.AntibioticAwareness.ca.

The website will also feature webcasts of Canadian experts discussing the latest information on antibiotic resistance and public health – two in English and one in French – on Nov. 18, 2010. Topics will include community education and prevention, antibiotic use and resistance in hospitals, and current Canadian programs and surveillance data. In Winnipeg, a local presentation will also be held at the University of Manitoba, Bannatyne Campus on Nov. 19, 2010 – a day after Antibiotic Awareness Day.

In addition to its partnership role in Antibiotic Awareness Day, PHAC is issuing an evidence-based guidance document related to antibiotic resistance that will aid health care workers in the management of patients colonized or infected with carbapenem-resistant infections, including those caused by bacteria that produce the enzyme NDM-1 (New Delhi metallo beta-lactamase). As part of PHAC’s Infection Prevention and Control Program Guideline Series, the document

provides recommendations to complement infection prevention and control practices for use by provinces and territories, health care facilities and health care personnel across Canada.

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