2020 - United to preserve antimicrobials

Visit the campaign website

2019 - The future of antibiotics depends on us all

Visit the campaign website

2018 - Change Can’t Wait. Our Time with Antibiotics is Running Out

Visit the campaign website

2017 - Seek advice from a qualified health care professional before taking antibiotics

Visit the campaign website

2016 - Antibiotics: handle with care

In 2016, World Antibiotic Awareness Week was held from 14 to 20 November under the slogan "Antibiotics: handle with care". The 2016 campaign aimed to increase awareness of global antibiotic resistance and called on individuals, governments, health workers and the agricultural sector to follow best practices to avoid the further emergence and spread of antibiotic resistance.

Antibiotics are medicines used to prevent and treat bacterial infections. Antibiotic resistance occurs when bacteria change in response to the use of these medicines. This is compromising our ability to treat infectious diseases and undermining many advances in medicine.

Bacteria, not humans or animals, become antibiotic-resistant. These bacteria may infect humans and animals, and the infections they cause are harder to treat than those caused by non-resistant bacteria.

World Antibiotic Awareness Week is an initiative arising from Objective 1 of the "Global Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance" that urged Member States to address antimicrobial resistance by improving awareness and understanding of antimicrobial resistance through effective communication, education and training.

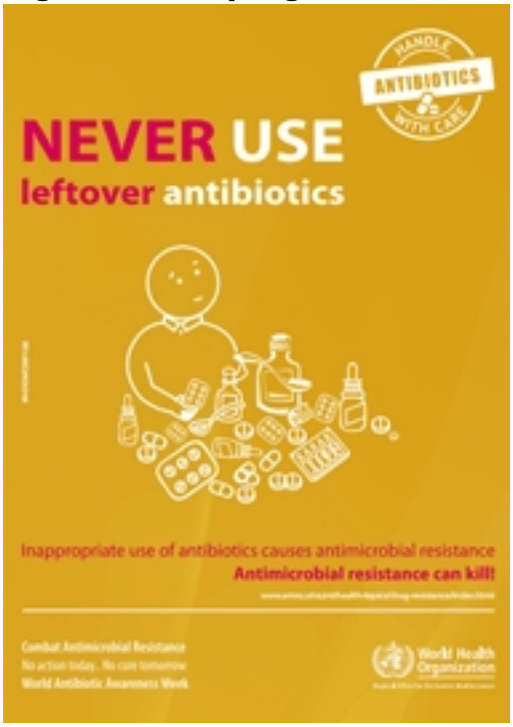
WHO calls on countries of the Region, partners, including United Nations agencies, ministries of health and agriculture, nongovernmental organizations, human and animal health professionals and others to join the campaign and advocate for the proper use of antibiotics.

World Antibiotic Awareness Week in the Region focuses on the following messages for the general public:

- Only use antibiotics when prescribed by a certified health professional.

- Don’t demand antibiotics if your health worker says you don’t need them.
- Always follow your health workers’ advice when using antibiotics.
- Never share leftover antibiotics.
- Prevent infections by regularly washing your hands, avoiding close contact with sick people, practice safer sex and keeping your vaccinations up to date.

Regional campaign materials



Never use leftover antibiotics

Only use antibiotics when prescribed by a trained health professional

Always take the full prescription even if you feel better